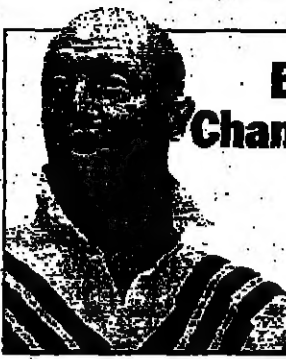
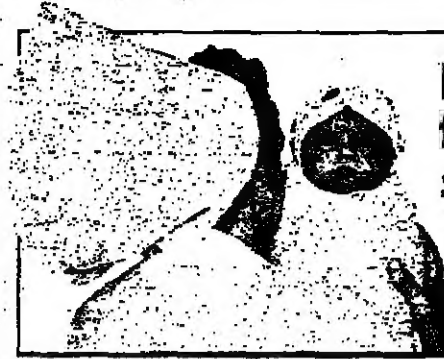




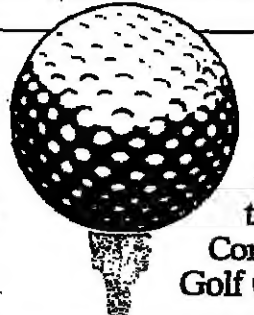
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400 top restaurants
Affordable meals with a restaurant to suit every taste. Details and voucher
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Scandal of the East-West trade in children
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On the tee
Guide to the 1996 Corporate Golf Challenge

Party leaders join forces as they go to the country again

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

IN A rare show of unity, the leaders of the three main political parties have written a joint letter to *The Times* to express their support for the protection of the countryside.

John Major, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown, deliberately echo the language of a similar, though perhaps even more remarkable letter published in *The Times* on May 8, 1929, and signed by Stanley Baldwin, then Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald and Lloyd George.

Mr Major and his political foes agreed to set aside their differences at the request of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), which inspired the earlier letter. They write: "During the

next few months we shall offer on so many problems of public importance that we gladly take the opportunity of showing that on one subject we speak with a united voice — namely, in advocating the protection of our countryside in its rich personality and character."

Fiona Reynolds, director of the CPRE, said: "We asked the three leaders if they would write a letter in the same spirit as that of 1929 to mark our seventeenth anniversary, which we are celebrating this year. We are delighted they agreed to do so."

The man credited with the 1929 coup is Sir Patrick Abercrombie, a pioneering town and country planner who three years earlier had played a leading role in founding the CPRE along with Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, the architect of the Italian-



Baldwin persuaded Lloyd George and Ramsay MacDonald to sign a similar letter

are fantasy of Portmeirion in North Wales.

Ms Reynolds said: "It all seems to have been arranged through gentlemanly contacts behind the scenes. Baldwin, a keen

country lover, is thought to have persuaded the other two leaders to sign. One of the few written references to the letter is in the minutes of an executive committee meeting held on April 24, 1929, which

notes that an appeal for funds supported by a leading article had appeared in *The Times* that morning.

Sadie Ward, the archivist, said: "The secretary of the meeting then read out a letter which it was hoped would be signed by Baldwin and the other two leaders in support of the appeal. This appeared in *The Times* on May 8. We know that Abercrombie had been trying to get such a letter published for some time."

The only other known time that the leaders of the three parties have sent a letter to the Editor was on July 6, 1981, when Margaret Thatcher, Michael Foot and David Steel appealed for funds for a memorial to Lord Mountbatten, but on that occasion they were joined by five other signatories.

The CPRE was launched at a time of

growing concern about the impact on the countryside of rapid urbanisation, fuelled by rising mobility and demand for better housing. Extensions to the Underground were making it easier for people to commute to work and the disfiguring sprawl of "ribbon development" went largely unchecked.

One of the CPRE's first successes was a campaign that forced Shell and other petroleum companies to take down unsightly roadside advertising. It also backed calls for a "green belt" (originally "girdle") round London, which was introduced in 1946.

Baldwin, who spent his boyhood in the Bewdley region of Worcestershire,

Continued on page 2, col 5

Letters, page 17

Public sector pay squeeze hits nurses

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND NICHOLAS WOOD

THE Government angered public-sector workers yesterday by restricting nurses to a national pay rise of 2 per cent and cutting back awards to a million others, including teachers and doctors.

Britain's 480,000 nurses were told they would have to rely on local bargaining to secure more than 2 per cent, an offer dismissed by nurses' leaders as "derisory". The Government added to their anger by declining to follow last year's practice of setting a target that nurses should be able to win from hospitals.

While ministers claimed that the absence of a ceiling on local deals could mean that nurses in some areas would win much more than 2 per cent, nurses' leaders denounced the squeeze as another attempt by the Government to limit local bargaining on these.

The dispute with the nurses and allied groups such as midwives and health visitors overshadowed the announcement of more generous rises, recommended by the independent pay review bodies, for doctors, teachers, dentists, members of the armed forces, judges, senior military and top civil servants.

The Cabinet was forced to make staged awards to these groups to protect its counter-inflationary policy, to keep borrowing under control, and to check the risk of a pay explosion among other public-

sector workers. The move, which saved £150 million, has alienated groups representing a million professionals in a pre-election year. Without staging the pay bill would have risen by £884 million or 4 per cent. The average initial pay increase will now be 3 per cent, while the inflation rate is 3.2 per cent.

Teachers will receive 3.75 per cent, with 2.75 per cent in April and the rest in December. Doctors will get an average of 3.8 per cent, with dentists on 4.3 per cent. There will be special rises for junior medical staff: registrars will receive 5.3 per cent and house officers will be given 6.8 per cent. In all cases, 1 percentage point of the rise will be delayed until December.

Judges will be given staged

rises of 3.9 per cent and senior military officers will receive an average increase of 4.6 per cent. Under a new performance-related pay structure, top civil servants could get up to 11 per cent, but poor performers might get nothing at all. Last year, the Government paid awards ranging from 1.5 per cent to 3.2 per cent.

The Royal College of Nursing called the 2 per cent award "utterly out of touch at a time of growing nursing shortages and rock bottom morale". It added: "Nurses will expect equality with junior doctors. They are worth 6.8 per cent too."

Andrew Smith, the Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, accused the Government of double standards. Cedric Brown, the chief executive of British Gas, could retire with £250,000 a year, while a staff nurse had been promised an increase of only £5 a week.

"The staging of the teachers' and other awards is a deception and an admission of economic failure by the Government, who are saying that they are doing so badly on the economy that they cannot afford to pay at once increases which they accept are justified," he said.

Ministers judged that the recommended pay rises could not be afforded within the spending increases announced for Whitehall departments last November. Fears



"See you on Monday"



Talks ahead: nurses will have to rely on local bargaining to top up their award

that some of the extra £880 million Budget allocation for schools might have to be siphoned off for teachers' pay awards is also believed to have influenced the Government's strategy. Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, ruled out raising the £3 billion reserve to fund the extra £150 million needed to pay the rises in full immediately.

Senior Treasury officials insisted that the decision would not affect the Chancellor's growth forecast for this year of 3 per cent.

Conservative MPs are concerned, however, that meddling with the review body awards could delay the reappearance of the "feel-good factor" and undermine the party's political recovery.

Many Tories saw the decision as a victory for Mr Clarke and senior Treasury officials. It was also seen as a strong signal that the Government intends to delay a general election until next spring to allow time for a fresh round of Budget tax cuts and another more generous pay round.

Pay deals, page 8

Myra Hindley may move to open prison

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

MYRA HINDLEY, the moors murderer jailed for life in 1966, should be considered for transfer to an open prison, the Parole Board has recommended.

The suggestion, which will spark a storm of controversy, was made following a review of her case last month. Michael Howard is now considering the recommendation, which he is under no obligation to accept.

But the Home Secretary faces a dilemma because a rejection could prompt a court challenge by lawyers acting for Hindley. Yet moving her to an open jail would trigger a public outcry.

It is understood that the panel of up to four members — including a psychiatrist — which considered Hindley's case did not suggest how long she should remain in prison. Hindley, 54, who was jailed for the murder of four children, is being held at Durham. Her lover, Ian Brady, also jailed for life, does not wish to be considered for parole.

The Prison Service has three



Hindley: a move could trigger public outcry

open jails for women — Askham Grange, near York, Drake Hall in Ecclestone, Staffordshire and East Sutton Park near Maidstone in Kent. Inmates are allowed great freedom to move around, sometimes outside the prison, without being guarded. None of the female open jails has a secure perimeter fence.

Mr Howard is also studying representations from Hindley's lawyers over a decision by Lord Waddington, when Home Secretary in 1990, that Hindley remain in prison for the rest of her life.

Prescription charge is increased by 25p

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PRESCRIPTION charges are to rise by 25p to £5.50p from April, an increase of nearly 5 per cent, the Government announced last night. Labour immediately accused ministers of sneaking through the increase in a parliamentary written answer and ducking

out of a Commons statement. Gerald Malone, the Health Minister also announced that the maximum charge for dental treatment is to rise from £300 to £325, but the value of optical vouchers, given to children and those on income support, would go up by only one per cent. Mr Malone insisted that Britain's exemption arrangements were still among the most generous in Europe.

Fees for prescription prepayment certificates will rise by £1.30 from £27.20 to £28.50 for a four month certificate and by £3.60 to £7.40 for an annual ticket. Mr Malone said that about 85 per cent of prescriptions dispensed in 1986-87 would be free.

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Tory drops in to win nomination

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

YOUNG Tory bloods will stop at nothing to win themselves the chance of a seat in the Commons. But few spend £1,600 to hire a helicopter to beat the driving snow and appear before two party selection meetings in different parts of the country during the same evening.

John Berrow, special adviser to Virginia Bottomley, did exactly that on Wednesday night when he was invited to the final selection meetings for two seats with majorities of more than 20,000.

Mr Berrow, 33, was invited to compete with five other candidates for Surrey Heath, a new seat created by boundary changes with a national majority of 22,754, and Buckingham, with a national majority of 20,644 where the list had been whittled down to three.

Mr Berrow and an old political friend, Julian Lewis, organised the trip between Surrey and Buckingham. First, they arranged with both party agents for him to appear first in Surrey and last in Buckingham, to allow enough time for the trip.

After being interviewed by Tory officials at the Lakeside Country Club at Frimley Green near Camberley, Surrey, Mr Berrow dived into a waiting chauffeur-driven car at 7.35pm, arriving at the Blackbushe airport at 7.50pm.

Mr Berrow, his girlfriend Louise Cumber, and Mr Lewis rushed out to the waiting Twin Squirrel helicopter where pilots Leon Smith and Bob Thompson, were preparing for the 35-minute flight. The three passengers crammed into the back of the five-

Collins and the missing million

Joan Collins took a verbal mauling in the witness stand in New York yesterday in a \$4 million breach of contract case with her former publisher. Earlier, she confessed that she had spent the \$1.2 million advance at the root of the dispute. "A million dollars sounds a lot, but it actually isn't," she said. Page 3

Media merger

A giant new media group was announced yesterday under a £3 billion marriage of the Express newspaper group with television station owner MAI. The new company will be run by Lord Hollick, MAI managing director Pages 6, 21

Accountancy exam

Results of The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales' December final examination will be published tomorrow. Copies will be available from London mainline stations from 10pm.



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To be a marginal Tory is the short straw in the lottery of life

o be born British, announced Peter Butler (C, T Milton Keynes NE) to a packed House, "is to win the lottery of life". The Prime Minister agreed.

Mr Butler, who said he was quoting Lord Palmerston, was received with cheers if not an impromptu rendering of *Land of Hope and Glory*. But his claim raises difficulties. First, it was not Lord Palmerston who coined the assertion, but Cecil John Rhodes. Second, Rhodes said "English", not "British". Third, it was not a

one-prize lottery to which Rhodes was referring. This is what Rhodes said: "Remember that you are an Englishman, and have consequently won first prize in the lottery of life."

Mere quibbles, of course. When (as in Butler's case) you are Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, you have better things to do than distinguish between one of our greatest Foreign Secretaries and a rascally commercial adventurer. English? British? From the

perspective of Milton Keynes, who cares? It must seem almost the same. And in Milton Keynes the pressure on libraries will be very great: there may have been no time for Mr Butler to check his references.

But the error we must correct is the idea that there is only one prize in the lottery of life. What about a second prize? This, surely, must be to be elected Conservative Member of Parliament for Milton Keynes NW. The numbers securing this prize are 01 41 76

— the Tory majority. Adjacent to Milton Keynes NW lies Milton Keynes SW. This constituency is third prize in the lottery of life, and was won in 1992 by Barry Legg (C): winning numbers 00 46 87.

There are also much smaller prizes, one of which is not even in England, but Wales, where Walter Sweeney (C) won the

you've only won £1, and spending it on a duff scratchcard.

Given those circumstances, John Major put up a pretty spirited performance yesterday afternoon. Tony Blair, thin-lipped with frustration, clawed the air for a few minutes on the subject of why key ministers (but nobody else) are receiving the Scott report six days before others. He clawed in vain: the Tories, baying to order, seem to have remembered that the party that bays together, stays together.

First, however, to question the Prime Minister, was Graham Riddick (C, Colne Valley). Mr Riddick dipped last year into the formula of life (when *Sunday Times* reported posing as a businessman offered him £1,000 to ask a question) and came up with only save dust. Then he was censured by the "privileges" committee. Pluckily, he bats on, but must be judged unfortunate, so far in fate's lottery: two blank scratchcards and his bonus ball most definitely missing. Yesterday he wanted to

place himself "four square behind the Union", criticising Tony Blair's constitutional plans. These came, he said, "from a meddling, middle-class public school boy". Sir Malcolm Thomson (C, Crosby), quoting a socialist document, said public schools "product social elites".

Of course Mr Major (as he reminded us) went to a grammar school. Nobody asked him whether, in his day, the senior boys received their examination papers six days early.



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Social security cut will cost 20,000 jobs, say unions

BY DOMINIC KENNEDY, JILL SHERMAN AND JEREMY LAURANCE

A POLITICAL storm blew up last night over the Government's plans to cut social security running costs by 25 per cent, with predictions that up to 20,000 jobs lost.

Labour claimed the planned £1 billion cutbacks would push the benefits system past breaking point and encourage fraud. Unions and charities insisted the cuts in the £4.5 billion administrative budget would hit genuine claimants and said they could provoke industrial action.

Barry Reamsbottom, general secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association, said it was impossible to reduce spending so swiftly without ending the Social Security Department's policy

of no compulsory redundancies. He predicted that up to 20,000 jobs would have to go in the next three years.

Chris Smith, Shadow Social Security Secretary, said that any move to greater self-assessment of benefits would inevitably give the "green lights" to fraudsters and undermine attempts by Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, to crack down on false claims.

In the Commons, the Prime Minister defended the cutbacks, chiding Labour for carping on about money spent on administrative costs and then complaining when the Government cut them to protect services.

"The Government is seeking

ing to cut back on administrative costs in the interests of the taxpayer," Mr Major told MPs. "It's right that we should try and make these efficiencies because the alternative obviously is to take the money away from benefits, which we don't want to do."

Unions are meeting DSS officials on February 19 to discuss the implications for jobs. Mr Lilley said he hoped compulsory job losses would be avoided, but civil servants remain sceptical.

Mr Reamsbottom, who represents 50,000 of the 88,000 civil servants in the DSS, said: "If it's compulsory redundancies, then there's a chance we might resort to industrial action."

The Social Security Department was giving no details of where the cuts, announced in a letter to all staff from Ann Bowtell, permanent secretary, would be made. A spokeswoman said efficiency savings of £550 million had been achieved since 1989/90, but there was a need for more.

Sally Wincher, director of Child Poverty Action Group, argued that genuine claimants would lose out. "I would be amazed if they could bring in cuts of this order and not leave claimants with a worse service," she said. "If the quality of service provided by the benefits agency is affected then people are going to come to organisations such as ours."

In her letter, Ms Bowtell makes clear that the 25 per cent cutback cannot be made simply by working harder or pruning costs. "The commitment and professionalism of all our staff has enabled us to deliver a major programme of change and to do our work more efficiently. But we face a significantly tougher challenge ahead. To keep within budget and cope with rising workloads, we need to find business efficiencies of at least a quarter by 1998/99."



John Bercow relaxes yesterday after bagging the nomination in Buckingham

Continued from page 1
seater, donned ear muffs against the noise and were off.

Meanwhile a friend, Nina Karsov, had driven up to Buckingham from London. Two cars — with their indicator lights flashing and their headlights on — marked out the area at Fimere where the helicopter landed with a bump at 8.25pm.

Mr Bercow and his friends rushed into the waiting car

Tory flight

and sped off for the school. In the car, Mr Bercow turned to Mr Lewis and said: "Julian, this is the best £1,000 I have ever spent." They arrived at the school with minutes to spare at 9pm.

Mr Bercow rushed onto the stage and addressed the faithful. "Just because I am a little chap, it doesn't mean I haven't

got a big ambition," he told them. Mr Bercow was selected, defeating Howard Flight and David Rutley.

Mr Bercow said last night: "To arrive at a Tory selection meeting by helicopter is a little unconventional but it certainly got my blood up. When an obstacle is put in your way, you need some resourcefulness to overcome it. It cost me a pretty penny but it was extremely well spent."

Lilley beats attempt to stall £200m cut in refugee benefits

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

PETER LILLEY won a High Court battle yesterday to halt benefits to thousands of asylum seekers aimed at saving £200 million a year. But the legality of the action is to be tested in a full court hearing in April.

Mr Justice Brooke turned down an appeal by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants to halt the cuts in spite of being told that some refugees find themselves destitute and on the streets without shelter. He ruled that he had "no jurisdiction" to intervene over the Government's decision on benefits, with took effect on Monday.

Mr Justice Brooke, brother

of Peter Brooke, the former Conservative Cabinet minister, said the number of people affected by the decision would be "comparatively small" although he expressed concern about those who would fall victim to the cuts.

Under the new rules, benefits will no longer be paid to asylum seekers appealing against a decision to refuse them status as refugees or to anyone who makes an asylum application having entered Britain for another reason.

Nicholas Blake, QC, for the JCWI said that asylum seekers would have to endure "extreme hardship", including "starvation and homelessness

in the snow". Steven Kovacs, for the Government, said it was "inappropriate" to "stay" regulations which at the moment were the law.

It would cost £1.5 million to change the computers if a stay was granted and another £1.5 million to change them back once that order was lifted.

The full case will be heard at the same time as a challenge by Conservative-controlled Westminster council and Labour Hammersmith and Fulham. Both have said that they will face big bills because of their continuing duty to house asylum seekers, even though those housed will have no access to benefits.

Data protection loophole exposed

Protection for personal information in computers was shown to be weak yesterday when the Law Lords said that it is no crime just to view data on a screen, (Frances Gibb writes). Upholding a ruling by the Court of Appeal, they held that the word "use" in the Data Protection Act 1984 meant more than simply accessing information and reading it.

By a 3-2 majority, the lords said that a Kent police officer who looked at data on the Police National Computer to check vehicle registrations was not guilty of a criminal offence. There was no evidence that he made any unauthorised use of the information, such as passing it to a debt collector.

Mr Brown, 38, of Gillingham, is no longer with the force. In March 1992, he had been fined £1,000 and ordered to pay £1,750 costs on one charge of using, and another of attempting to use, personal data for a purpose other than that for which his police force was registered.

Law report, page 28

Ashdown court evidence

Paddy Ashdown gave evidence in court yesterday at Yeovil Magistrates' Court against a constituent who is alleged to have threatened him with a flick knife. Christopher Mason, 51, who is charged with affray and possessing an offensive weapon, was committed for trial on March 1 at Taunton Crown Court. Mr Ashdown spent about 40 minutes giving evidence. He was also cross examined by Michael Cullum, representing Mr Mason, who was remained in custody. Reporting restrictions were not lifted.

Major defends Lords

The Prime Minister said yesterday that Labour's pledge to reform the House of Lords was a "spiteful, thoughtless irrelevance". He made it clear that he did not believe banishing hereditary peers from the Upper House would do anything to bring the constitution into the next century. Tory peers yesterday started working on their own suggestions for more moderate modifications to the Upper Chamber which could include allowing some hereditary peers to vote alongside working peers.

School seatbelts ruling

Minibuses and coaches used to carry children to and from school or on school trips will have to be fitted with seatbelts from February next year, Steven Norris, the Road Safety Minister, announced yesterday. But proposals for Europe-wide regulations forcing all coaches to be fitted with seatbelts remain unresolved in Brussels and may not be implemented this year. In the meantime Britain is going alone in implementing regulations requiring a label to be fitted to every seat used by a child aged 16 and under.

Tory council's triple zero

One of the last eight Tory-controlled district councils in England has set a zero rate council tax for the third year running, despite losing £800,000 from its central government grant. Residents in South Staffordshire will have to pay the county council and local parish precepts, amounting to £452 for a Band D home. This is a 4.6 per cent increase compared with an expected national average rise of 8 per cent. The Conservatives have an overall majority of one on the 50-seat council.

Rave vicar goes to US

The disgraced "rave" clergyman Chris Brain has left Britain for America to try to make a comeback in the music and media business. Mr Brain, 38, who allegedly abused up to 20 women during his Nine O'Clock services in Sheffield, left the country without his wife after Christmas, according to his lawyer. Stewart Lale said: "Mr Brain has gone to America because he is less well-known there than here and he considered his chances of finding employment in Britain remote. He wants nothing to do with cults or religion."

The postman bites back

The Royal Mail has declared an entire street a no-go area after a postman was bitten twice by the same dog in a few weeks. Jack Kilpatrick, 55, a postman for 32 years, was first attacked by Henry, an Alsatian cross, early in January, while approaching the door of the house in Causeway, Chessington, Surrey. Last week Henry struck again. Now, in what is believed to be the first time the Royal Mail has suspended deliveries to a street because of a dog, residents are having to collect their mail from the sorting office.

Cedric's bacon saved

Cedric the pig, who was paraded in front of British Gas shareholders last year as part of a protest against executive greed, has been saved from the slaughterhouse by becoming an honorary member of the GMB general union. The union saved the 200lb saddleback sow, which had become infertile and fat after eating too many biscuits offered by children, by arranging an early retirement package that would include guest appearances at union events. Cedric will continue to live on Muddchute Farm in east London until she dies.

Party leaders write letter on countryside

Continued from page 1
reflected these concerns in a series of speeches imbued with a nostalgia for a rural England that was already passing. In 1924, he said: "The sounds of England, the tinkle of the hammer on the anvil in the country smithy, the cornacre on a dewy morning, the sound of the scythe against the whetstone, and the sight of a plough team coming over the brow of a hill, the sight that has been seen in England since England was a land, and may be seen in England long after the Empire has perished

and every works in England has ceased to function, for centuries the one eternal sight of England."

The countryside he evoked still bore some resemblance to reality when Baldwin died in 1947. In the half-century since it has vanished as completely as the Empire itself.

Mr Major shares some of Baldwin's nostalgia but not his eloquence. When he wanted to evoke a similarly romanticised idea he drew partly on George Orwell for his image of "long shadows on county grounds, warm beer,

and old maids bicycling to the Holy Communion through the morning mist". Orwell's view of Baldwin was jaundiced, to say the least: "One could not even dignify him with the name of a stuffed shirt; he was simply a hole in the air."

Today the CPRE has a branch in every county in England and 45,000 members who pay an annual subscription of £17.50. These do not include Mr Major, Mr Blair or Mr Ashdown.

The parallels with 1929 are not exactly happy for Mr Major. Within three weeks of

signing the letter, Baldwin led the Tories into a crushing defeat in the general election on May 30, when the number of Tory MPs fell from 419 to 250. With 288 Labour MPs, Ramsay MacDonald formed a minority Government, and, just as Paddy Ashdown now hopes, Lloyd George's Liberals had a pivotal role with 59 MPs. But within two years the Labour Government had disintegrated in bitter splits and a Tory-dominated coalition was in office.

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'\$1m sounds a lot but it actually isn't. I don't have it. It has already gone'

Joan Collins takes a pounding over missing advance

FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN NEW YORK

JOAN COLLINS took a verbal mauling in the witness stand yesterday in a \$4 million breach of contract case with her former publisher. Earlier, she confessed that she had spent the \$1.2 million advance at the root of the dispute. "A million dollars sounds a lot but it actually isn't," she said.

Miss Collins is being sued by Random House for failing to deliver a satisfactory manuscript for two novels, *A Ruling Passion* and *Hell Hath No Fury*. Random House is seeking the return of its advance, while Miss Collins is counter-suing for the balance on the \$4 million.

Outside court Miss Collins said that the \$1.2 million had gone. "The taxman takes 40 per cent, my agent took his 10 per cent, my publisher took his 10 per cent — I don't remember which. And that doesn't really leave you a great deal," she told the *New York Post*. "I don't have the \$1.2 million. It has already gone."

In court, she was called as a hostile witness by Robert Callagy, Random House's sleek lawyer. He showed that in an earlier lawsuit she claimed to have suffered from writer's block during the com-



Joan Collins: being sued for return of advance

position of books commissioned by Random House. During an invasion of privacy case against the *Globe* newspaper, Miss Collins had claimed that the distress she suffered from the publication of indiscreet photographs of her with a man had quite put her off writing her novel.

Mr Callagy argued that her claims during that lawsuit were at odds with her claim now that the manuscript she delivered to Random House two months later was "complete". "You tell the *Globe* one thing when you're suing them, and you say another thing here when you're suing Ran-

dom House," he said. Miss Collins: "No, no. Mr Callagy: 'Don't you have any shame?' A red-cheeked Miss Collins replied with a weak smile and left the witness stand, breathing through her nose.

In her remarks to the *Post*, Miss Collins complained that the case was costing her "a very great deal". She said: "It is about power. About powerful forces. Swifty Lazar, who was my agent, was so very powerful. Random House is one of the most powerful publishers in the world. I'm not an international corporation. I'm one person. I don't have the kind of money they do."

She added that Random House's editor, Joni Evans, when courting her for the book deal, had "seduced" her "like a man trying to get a woman in to bed. She told me how wonderful I was, how terrific. She kept telling me I was the greatest thing since sliced bread. She told people: 'I want Joan Collins in my stable so much it can taste it.'"

At the end of her evidence, Miss Collins' elder sister, the novelist Jackie, dabbed her left eye and took out a tissue. She then left for a private room, where she was closeted for 25 minutes.

The case continues.



David Troughton and Josie Lawrence, named best actor and actress in the Shakespeare awards

Comedian wins Shakespeare prize

BY DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

JOSIE LAWRENCE, the comedian who began her career in working-men's clubs, has been recognised for her work as a classical actress. Her performance as Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* won the Dame Peggy Ashcroft prize for best actress yesterday in the Shakespeare Golden Globe awards in London.

Despite the comedy within Shakespeare's battle-of-the-sexes play, Lawrence, 36, had seemed a surprising choice for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Although she had always wanted to be an actress, she had not played any Shakespeare since drama college. As a

comic-actor venturing into the world of the Bard, she was following in the footsteps of Frankie Howerd and Kenneth Williams, among others.

Lawrence, best known on television for the improvisation show *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, said earlier this year: "I knew I needed to get back to more theatre. I could either do quiz shows and join the celebrity circuit, or go back to where I started." The play transfers from Stratford-upon-Avon to the Barbican Centre in the spring.

The Sir John Gielgud award for best actor went to David Troughton, who has been playing *Richard III* as a devious jester and supporting John Nettles in Ben Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass*. The

Richard Burton award for most promising newcomer went to Helen McCrory for her *Lady Macbeth*. Silviu Purcारे, director of *The Tempest* at the Notting-ham Playhouse, won the Peter Brook award for best director. The Almeida Theatre in Islington, north London, won the Sir Tyrone Guthrie award for best production for taking its *Hamlet*, starring Ralph Fiennes, to Hackney and New York. The judges included the *Times* critic Benedict Nightingale.

Nick Park, 37, creator of the animated characters Wallace and Gromit, collected four awards for *A Close Shave* — including the public choice for favourite film — at the British Animation Awards last night.

Doctor in scrumping attack is cleared

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A DOCTOR convicted of assault after hitting a teenager he caught stealing apples from his garden won a court case to clear his name yesterday.

Dr Subhan Singh struck Mark Leak, 15, with a 2ft stick as he clambered over a fence with apples in his pockets. At an appeal hearing at Leicester Crown Court a judge ruled he did not know Leak was only scrumping and used reasonable force to defend his property.

Dr Singh, 41, a theatre anaesthetist, said: "My faith in British justice has been sustained. I still believe I did the right thing."

He told the court he picked up a stick as he ran into his garden after seeing two boys from his bedroom window. "I was shouting to the boys to stop but they kept running. One got over the fence, the other was straddling it. I just managed to reach him with the tip of my stick, with which I hit him. My intention was to apprehend him and give him over to the police."

Leak, now 17, was later cautioned for theft but told officers Dr Singh struck him twice with a metal pole when he was on top of the fence.

Dr Singh's costs for the appeal and original magistrates court hearing last summer will be paid from central funds. He had been ordered to pay £125 costs and given a six-month conditional discharge by magistrates who found him guilty of common assault.

The Crown Prosecution Service decided to prosecute him after he refused a police caution for the alleged assault on the teenager in August 1994.

Hunt for rapist after woman is found murdered

BY RICHARD DUCE

A POLICE hunt was under way last night for a convicted rapist after a mother of two was found murdered at her home overlooking a yacht marina near Portsmouth.

Police issued a picture of a man they named as Victor Farrant and warned the public not to approach him. A spokesman said: "The man we are looking for is very dangerous."

The body of Glenda Hoskins, 45, an accountant, was found in the attic of her £110,000 three-bedroom terraced house in Sennen Place, next to the marina at Port Solent, where the television series *Howard's Way* was filmed.

Mrs Hoskins was last seen on Wednesday at 8.30am when she took her children to school. The alarm was raised when her daughter Kate, 17, came home but could not get in because the door was locked from the inside. Kate was joined by her brother David, 14, and they telephoned their father, George, who was separated from their mother. They tried to get in on a number of occasions during the evening and at midnight police broke in and found the body.

Police said the children were "deeply traumatised" and detectives were waiting to speak to them. They are being comforted by relatives.

Officers said they were anxious to trace Mrs Hoskins's white Ford Escort Cabriolet, registration number M987 AFO, which is missing. Police said they believed Farrant was the dead woman's boyfriend.

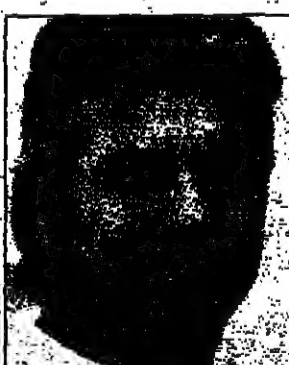
Detective Superintendent David Hanna, who is leading the inquiry, said: "We are urging anyone who has knowledge of Mr Farrant's whereabouts to contact police."

Mr Farrant is thought to live in the Portsmouth area and to have connections with Sussex. He is about 6ft 11in tall and heavily built with grey, shoulder-length wavy hair.

Appealing for Mr Farrant to come forward, Mr Hanna said: "He used the vehicle on a number of occasions and may be in innocent possession of the car. We are anxious to locate him and eliminate him from the inquiry."

Mrs Hoskins worked from home. Police said it was known she had a business appointment on Wednesday after taking her children to school. Inquiries are under way to see if she kept it.

A post-mortem examination was carried out yesterday by the Home Office pathologist, Dr Roger Ainsworth but the result was said to be inconclusive. Further tests will be made, but death by natural causes has been ruled out.



Farrant thought to be the victim's boyfriend

Convicted killer attacked teenager

BY STEPHEN FARRELL

A PSYCHIATRIC patient who raped a teenage girl was a convicted killer who had served only five months in a secure hospital before being released back into the community.

Ranjit Matharu, 39, strangled his sister in 1986 during an argument at her home in Hounslow, west London. He was convicted of manslaughter due to diminished responsibility and sent to a secure mental hospital. Months later doctors considered him "cured" and released him.

In November last year a Knightsbridge Crown Court jury found him guilty on two charges of rape, one of indecent assault, false imprisonment and kidnapping.

Judge Aglionby adjourned sentence for psychiatric assessment but yesterday granted extra time to doctors who said they did not know the extent of Matharu's condition. He told Matharu he would be jailed for life or sent to a maximum security mental hospital.

The court was told that Matharu, of no fixed abode, toured west London in the van in which he lived searching for victims at random. The rape happened in June last year as his victim was walking home through Fulham.

Matharu, wielding a screwdriver, ordered her into the van and drove her to the Thames at Hammersmith, where he raped her twice. After forcing her to reveal her name, address and telephone number he drove her home.

Matharu was caught the next night after he tried to pick up a Polish au pair who fled and alerted police.

Verger lost job over affair

BY RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE head verger at Ely Cathedral resigned after admitting an adulterous affair with the organist's wife. It was disclosed yesterday. Malcolm Johnson, married with one daughter, has lost a claim for unfair dismissal.

Mr Johnson had an 18-month romance with Sally Trepte, wife of Paul Trepte, director of music. She broke off the affair after her lover's resignation.

Mr Johnson, who is in his

forties, told the tribunal at Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, that he had been forced to resign, but the tribunal said there was no evidence of this. Its written decision said, that even if it had considered his argument, he would have been refused compensation because his conduct was the cause of dismissal.

The written adjudication of the tribunal lifted a reporting restriction on naming Mrs Trepte. The cathedral's Dean, the Very Rev Michael Higgins, told the hearing: "Having undermined what we

stood for, his position had become untenable. Anyone who works for the Church knows there are traditions and Christian principles to be observed. It is not necessary to spell it out."

The Dean admitted that the cathedral had originally tried to gloss over Mr Johnson's departure by saying it was for "health reasons". He said: "He was offered a good package. No one wants to see these affairs lauded in public. I found it quite amazing that within a fortnight he had issued these proceedings."

Lincoln clergy ask Carey to end row over dean

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

SENIOR clergy have called on the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, to resolve the long-running crisis at Lincoln Cathedral and rule on the future of its dean.

About 30 canons overwhelmingly approved a resolution at a confrontational meeting between the Very Rev Brandon Jackson, Dean of Lincoln, and his Chapter yesterday, urging Dr Carey to deliver his verdict and take decisive action.

Dr Carey sent two senior churchmen to talk to both factions late last year. Many clergy in the diocese believe the archbishop has been sitting on the findings and has delayed publication.

After yesterday's meeting Canon Raymond Rodger, personal assistant to the Right Rev Robert Hardy, Bishop of Lincoln, said: "The majority feel matters are so bad it can only be resolved by a change of personnel. We want a decisive view from the archbishop."

It was not clear last night whether Dr Jackson, 61, would comply with any ruling from the archbishop. He was appointed by Downing Street in 1989 and, legally, he is untouchable until his retirement at the age of 70.

The dispute can be traced back to an exhibition of the cathedral's Magna Carta in Australia in 1988 to raise funds. It lost £56,000. The following year Dr Jackson was appointed Dean and invited the fraud squad to investigate the cathedral's affairs.

The atmosphere worsened last summer when Dr Jackson was acquitted in a church consistory court of sexual misconduct with Verity Freestone, 31, a former cathedral verger. Dr Jackson believed he was the victim of a conspiracy.

A spokeswoman for Dr Carey said: "The archbishop shares the widespread anxiety and concern that has been expressed about the situation at Lincoln Cathedral. He is actively considering the implications of the report but these are complex matters and it would not be appropriate to make further comment."

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Newbury guards bypass soup and superiors on the road to defection

BY NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

THREE security guards employed to police the Newbury bypass protesters have changed camps because of heavy-handed tactics by some of their colleagues. Last night the men were enjoying "one or two bevvies" in an eco-warrior encampment at Tot Hill, towards the southern end of the route.

Friends of the Earth, which is spearheading the campaign against the bypass, said it was delighted at the defections. A spokesman claimed that many of the guards were fed up with the Reliant security company. "They forbid fraternisation with the protesters and have employed heavy-handed tactics in dealing with the protest."

A spokeswoman for Reliant dismissed claims of heavy-handedness and said: "People are quite entitled to change their views of life. We cannot legislate for people's opinions. We live in a democracy."

She had visited the site on Wednesday and, despite the cold, had found the 597 other guards in good spirits, thanks to three soup-runs a day.

Brette Shepherd, 20, one of the defectors, who was unemployed for two years before joining Reliant, said the final straw was being ordered by a supervisor not to chat with the environmentalists. "It was all too much, so I have given it up. I am staying at the camp for the rest of the week."

Stephen Ray, like Mr Shepherd from Portsmouth,

said he had witnessed one of his superiors assaulting a female protester and making a remark: "I was told to stand in the car park of a nearby garage. While I was there I told two policemen what I had seen." He had then been sacked.

Graham Wanstall, the other defector, said he was demoted from a security cameraman to a linesman after trying to film a senior guard hitting a protester.

Friends of the Earth said last night that the three had been given free membership and were to be fitted at a rally and march this weekend.

A spokesman for Thames Valley Police said he could not comment on the allegations of assault.

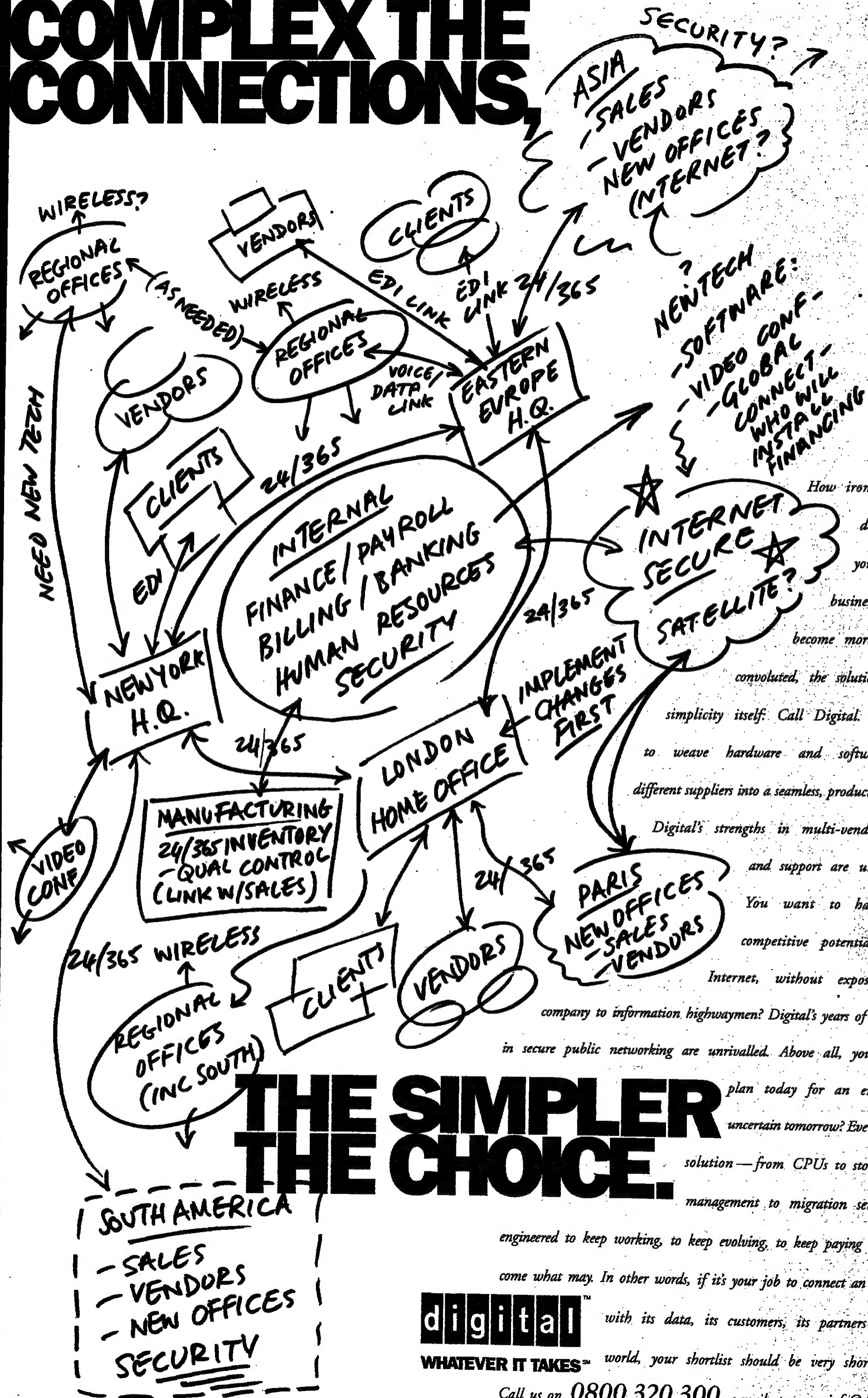
Earlier, rush-hour traffic

in the centre of Newbury was halted when about 30 protesters climbed on to low-loader lorries and strapped themselves to machines being taken to the site. A Thames Valley Police spokesman said: "Both south-bound lanes of the A34 through the centre of Newbury were blocked and at one point there was a nine-mile tailback."

She said that seven people were arrested and charged with wilful obstruction of the highway.

Church groups around Newbury are angry that a religious service planned for today on the bypass site will be led by a Church of England vicar from Cambridgeshire. They fear the service will appear to condone the protesters' activities.

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Fast-track libel cases would go to judges

By Frances Gibb

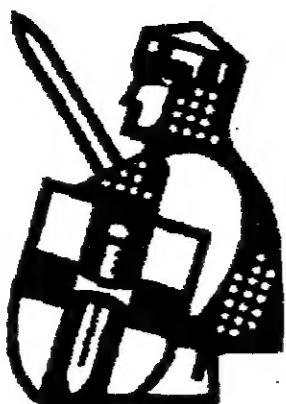
A FAST-TRACK procedure for libel claims up to £10,000 was unveiled by the Government yesterday. The Defamation Bill will introduce a summary procedure in which judges, not juries, can dispose of more straightforward claims.

The Bill will also allow new defences for defendants willing to offer amends to plaintiffs and to pay whatever damages a judge might assess. Providers of electronic media services, such as the Internet, will be protected against libel proceedings. Those who do not have primary responsibility for publication, such as printers, distributors or sellers, would also have a defence.

The aim is to get cases before a judge more quickly and reduce the number going before juries in long, expensive trials. Judges would have the power to dismiss weak claims and, in the case of strong claims, to make awards of up to £10,000.

Political foes merge to protect media interests

By Alexandra Frean
Media Correspondent



Express Newspapers: takeover threat gone

TWO peers from opposite sides of the political spectrum announced a merger yesterday that will create one of Britain's most powerful media conglomerates.

The *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express*, once part of the mighty Beaverbrook empire, are combining with M.A.L. owner of two ITV stations and a money-broking business, in a defensive move that will remove the threat of takeover from both companies.

Lord Stevens of Ludgate, chairman of United News and Media, is a true-blue Tory who has pledged to ensure that his national newspapers continue to support the Conservative Party. Lord Hollick, chairman of M.A.L., is a card-carrying Labour supporter and eschews the trappings of nobility. He despises his City nickname, the Red Baron, and is referred to in the merger documents as Clive Hollick. Lord Stevens uses his title throughout.

Lord Hollick is expected to call all the shots in the newly merged group. He said yesterday: "I will probably continue to read [the *Express*] and continue to disagree with it...

It would be crazy to change the political stance, it is part of their brand." Observers believe, however, that the *Express* newspapers, which have been the most loyal to John Major of all national titles, are likely to mellow their tone under the new regime.

Although the *Daily Star*, United's other daily, has long been seen as its most vulnerable national title, Lord Stevens said it was safe, adding that it was an "excellent" newspaper. In spite of their differences, the two life peers have some things in common: they are both from the middle classes and built their careers in

financial services. Neither has ever had the absolute power over their respective press and television interests like the old-fashioned media barons.

Lord Stevens was born into a middle-class family, the head of which invented the first hearing aid to be worn in the ear. Although prickly, tough and proud, Lord Stevens shows glints of humour. "He is not really the kind of person you would have to dinner unless he were chairman of a newspaper," one associate said.

Regarded by some as a shrewd operator, others consider him out of his depth in Fleet Street. Since he took the helm of United in 1981, the circulation of his two flagship titles has continued to decline. The *Daily Express* sells 1.28 million copies, compared with more than four million in the mid-1950s. The *Sunday* title has a circulation of 1.33 million, against a high of 4.2 million in 1965.

Although Lord Stevens has made a last-ditch attempt to restore the titles to their earlier glory by appointing new editors and increasing investment, it is believed that they desperately need new management.

Lord Hollick is wiry and intense, a bulldog of a man, said by associates to be driven by ambition. He is a grammar-school boy from Southampton, whose father was a French polisher. He studied sociology, politics and psychology at Nottingham University, where he was president of the drama society. At 28 he became the youngest director of Hambros Bank.

He helped to sort out the Mirror group after Robert Maxwell's death but resigned his directorship soon afterwards. He moved into television in 1994 — an interest that stems in part from his Trinidadian wife, Susan Woodford, a former director of ITV's *World in Action*.

The rationale behind the merger is that it will allow both companies to make cost savings in the areas of news-gathering and distribution. The company envisages the creation of multimedia digital newsrooms to serve its national and regional papers and its television stations. There will be also opportunities for cross-promotion between the print and television operations.

The deal, page 21
Pennington, page 23
Global race, page 25



Archbishop Worlock, left, and Bishop Sheppard, whose united leadership encouraged ecumenism

Liverpool mourns death of Worlock

By Kate Alderson
and Ruth Gledhill

TRIBUTES poured in yesterday for the Most Rev Derek Worlock, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, who died peacefully in his sleep after a long battle with cancer.

Archbishop Worlock's close friendship and working relationship with the Right Rev David Sheppard, Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, helped to unite the city and inspired better relations between the churches. Their close friendship earned them the sobriquet "fish-in-a-cup" because they were always together and never out of the newspapers.

Bishop Sheppard said: "All the Churches have lost a great archbishop. The city and people of Liverpool have lost a great champion."

Archbishop Worlock, 76, died in hospital at 5.30am yesterday. His death came 20 years after he took up his post in the city and three days after his 76th birthday.

He had surgery to remove his left lung 3½ years ago after contracting cancer and was admitted to hospital last July suffering from exhaustion. He had a brain tumour that was inoperable.

A single bell tolled at a hunchtime mass in the city's Roman Catholic cathedral yesterday. The tributes praised a man universally regarded as a champion of the poor, scourge of sectarianism and devotee of Liverpool.

Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, said Archbishop Worlock was an outstanding servant of the Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, said: "His ministry reached far beyond the boundaries of the Roman Catholic community and touched with grace all the Christian churches of our land."

The search for a successor is almost complete. Front-runners are the Right Rev David Konstant, Bishop of Leeds, and the Right Rev Patrick Kelly, Bishop of Salford. A popular choice would be the Right Rev Vincent Nichols, Bishop of North London and Liverpool.

Obituary, page 19

Runaways threaten beaver plan

By Gillian Bowditch

A PLAN to reintroduce the European beaver to Scotland is under threat after children found one of its Canadian cousins at the side of Loch Lomond. It is the second thought to have escaped from a private collection.

Sandy Kerr, head of biodiversity at Scottish Natural Heritage, said the two types could create a hybrid that might prove sterile. However, he hopes the problem can be overcome if there are few Canadian colonies.

The female beaver found yesterday by the loch is now recovering in the Heston Wildlife Rescue Centre at Beith, Ayrshire.

Buying food for your heart's delight

By Robin Young

THIS weekend everything from pizzas and loaves to cheese and chocolates is available heart-shaped for St Valentine's Day.

Besides running special offers on red roses, bouquets at £4.99 and dozens at £9.99, supermarkets are also keen to emphasise exotic fruits such as guava, mango, physalis, tamarillo and passion fruit as alternative Valentine's Day gifts, and to draw attention to vegetables with aphrodisiac reputations, including red peppers, avocado, asparagus, and aubergine. For more old-fashioned romantics, oysters should be available from 49p each.

Advertised buys include: Asda: fresh boned pork leg £3.28 kg, fresh beef rump steak £7.19 kg, baby new potatoes 49p punnet, tomatoes £1.19 kg, almond fingers 49p for seven. Sainsbury: Sovereign fresh chicken stir fry £1.99 for 1lb, chicken stir fry mix 99p for 370g, Ross Oriental Sausage egg fried rice 99p for 450g, Amy's yellow bean and black bean sauce 89p for 235g. Asda: fresh pork spare-rib chops £2.60 kg, fresh whole duckling 1.8kg £2.75, sweet cured bacon 25p for 100g, corned beef 25p for 100g, breaded cod fillets 79p for 195g, chicken tikka pizza £1.49 for 340g. Morrisons: heart-shaped, smoked salmon pillows £3.95, heart-shaped sausages 55p each, Baller Coeur £3.35, Coeur de Chèvre £4.50, Coeur de Neuchâtel £2.95, silver sausages with mango and ginger dressing £3.95 for 100g.

smoked eel and potato salad £4.95 for 100g, Asda: turkey breast fillets £3.99 for 700g, cheese and ham chicken Kiev £1.39 for two, prawns £1.99 for 200g, baby new potatoes £1.19 for 450g, broccoli florets 99p for 907g, brussels sprouts 99p for 360g, Marks & Spencer: Roast chicken drumsticks £1.99 for 540g, frozen at sea haddock in breadcrumbs £2.99 for 600g, chicken casserole with herb dumplings £2.99 for 1lb, Chinese meat for two £4.99 for 800g, Shazwell oranges £1.99 for two, Morrisons: whole trout £2.54 kg, large cleaned salmon £2.39 kg, middle bacon £2.94 kg, Cheddar cheese £2.84 kg, Sainsbury: Turkey breast steaks £3.19 for 567g, glazed stewing steak £2.00 kg, fresh medium chicken £1.79 kg, medium Irish cheddar £1.89 lb, red plums 69p lb, tomatoes 45p lb, white frozen rolls 99p for 20, Sainsbury: Chicken Kiev £2.60 for four, unsprinkled rindless back bacon £1.99 for 312g, cod portions in crispy breadcrumbs £1.95 for 600g, loose new potatoes 21p lb, spinach 99p for 400g, apple crumble 89p for 450g, oranges £1.39 for eight, Sainsbury: Chicken breasts £3.48 for 1.3kg, fresh baked turkey breast joint £2.99 for 500g, Lidl: Corn lettuce 59p per pack, red potatoes £1.09 per punnet, pesto £1.49 each, Tesco: Half leg of lamb £5.19 kg, pork spare-rib chops £2.75 kg, bristles £3.99 kg, haddock fillets £1.98 lb, salmon steak £2.95 lb, crumpets 53p for 15, Waitrose: British pork boneless shoulder roast £2.99 kg, English dried veal £2.58 for 300g, White celery 55p for 700g, large cantaloupe melons £1.49 each, chamois fruit 79p for 100g, new potatoes 29p lb.

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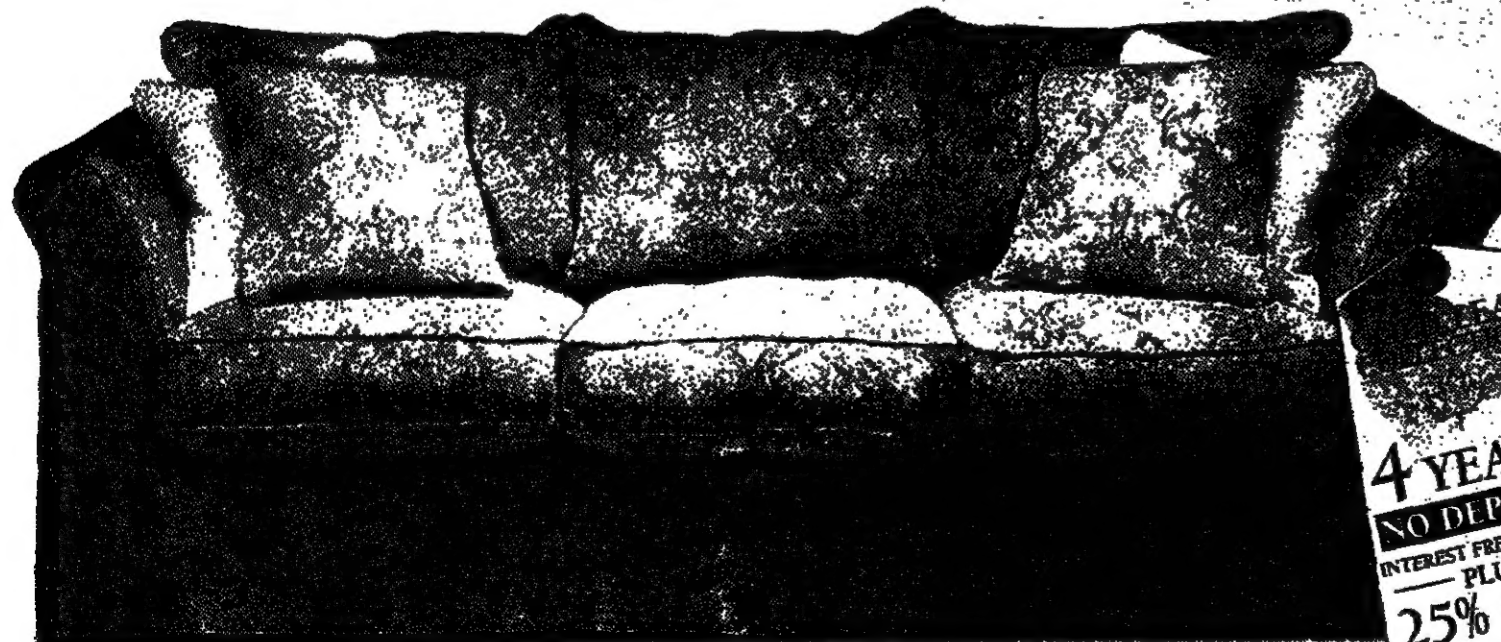
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Services face rent increases in £227m package



BY MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A SHARP increase in rents for Service married quarters was announced yesterday as part of the overall pay deal for the 227,400 men and women in the Armed Forces. The package will cost taxpayers an extra £227 million in the next financial year.

Most rents are to increase by 10 to 15 per cent, and by 25 per cent for the biggest houses. In an attempt by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body to match Service rents with those in the

private sector. To cushion the blow, the increases will be staged.

Despite increasing concern over Army recruiting shortages, particularly for the infantry, pay differentials still favour the top brass. The four most senior officer ranks — field marshal to major-general and their equivalents in the Royal Navy and RAF — are to receive an average increase of 4.6 per cent (ranging from 3.9 to 5.6 per cent) and the remainder 3.5 per cent (3.2 to 3.8 per cent) by December 1.

The salary of Britain's most senior

military officer, Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge, Chief of the Defence Staff, will rise to £125,850 and that of the most junior soldier, a newly recruited private, to £3,921. The higher award will affect 153 senior officers, including four generals, 11 lieutenant-generals and 43 major-generals.

However, the differential between the highest and lowest ranks is absorbed by two other elements of the award which only benefit Service personnel of the rank of brigadier and below. The men and women in this category will receive an additional "X

factor" increase of 0.5 per cent, a special "disruption" allowance, and a beneficial change in the way pension liability is assessed that will mean the equivalent of a further 2 per cent in take-home pay, phased over two years.

The rest of the pay award is also being staged so that 1 per cent of the increase will be held back until December 1. The bulk of the award will be paid from April 1.

Last year the most senior officer ranks were awarded a 3.2 per cent increase. All other ranks received an average 2.6 per cent.

ARMED FORCES		
	Current	Dec 1 1996
Field Marshal	121,130	125,850
General	55,050	57,000
Lieutenant-general	40,391	41,838
Major-general	35,500	36,290
Brigadier	27,738	28,257
Colonel	24,020	24,599
Lieutenant colonel	20,391	20,938
Major	18,543	19,010
Captain	17,571	18,028
Lieutenant	17,549	18,005
Second Lieutenant	13,352	13,868
Warrant Officer	18,944	19,537
Staff Sergeant	17,725	18,280
Sergeant	16,758	17,288
Corporal	14,184	14,687
Lance corporal	11,500	11,910
Private	3,476	3,921
Private IV	5,469	5,821

Nurses say 2% deal is insult to the profession

BY JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

NURSING unions reacted with a mixture of outrage and disbelief yesterday at the gap between their award and the near 7 per cent rise for some junior doctors. Christine Hancock, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, said: "Today's award is derisory. Nurses will expect equality with junior doctors. They are worth 6.8 per cent too."

The rises for doctors and dentists of up to 6.8 per cent took the highest paid consultant to £106,140. The nurses were awarded a 2 per cent increase in national pay scales plus an unquantified amount to be negotiated locally.

The Royal College of Midwives said the award was "insulting" and sent a signal to women that "their health and that of their babies is devalued".

Junior doctors' salaries range from £22,000 to £42,000 including overtime compared with £10,000 to £24,000 for nurses.

Unions said the pay award would do nothing to solve the staffing crisis in the NHS. Malcolm Wing, deputy head of Unison, said: "Staff will continue to leave the service in droves, leading to even more bed closures. School leavers will continue to look elsewhere for a career."

However, the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts said the national award of 2 per cent was "too large to give the complete flexibility that trusts want" to negotiate their own rates of pay.

Philip Hunt, the director, said: "Next year will be very tight financially. Trusts want to be fair to staff but at the end of the day they can't let pay increases eat into the resources available for patient

care." NHS unions are to meet on Monday to discuss plans for a nationally co-ordinated campaign to put an agreed pay demand to each individual NHS trust. Nurses sought total rises of 8 per cent and physiotherapists and other professions allied to medicine asked for 16 per cent in evidence to the pay review bodies.

The unions are angry at the Government's refusal to set guidelines for the size of the local element of pay award. Last year, nurses received a national pay award of 1 per cent with a recommendation that trusts should offer up to a further 2 per cent. By the end of the year, following threats of industrial action, all but a handful of trusts had paid the full 3 per cent.

Under an agreement that secured the end of the pay dispute last autumn every NHS trust will raise its pay scale by the full 3 per cent already agreed by the majority of trusts from 31 March.

In contrast with the nurses, the Government has dropped



its drive to introduce local pay for doctors. Consultants and GPs are to receive a national 3.8 per cent rise with a 4.8 per cent increase for dentists, with no local element. The rises will be staged, to ease the pressure on NHS trusts budgets, with the final 1 per cent paid at 1 December.

Last year consultants were offered up to an extra 2.5 per cent on top of the 2.5 per cent national rise if they signed local contracts. More than 90 per cent of consultants failed to take up the offer according

to the British Medical Association.

Junior doctors will receive increases ranging from 4.3 per cent to 6.8 per cent. However, only the few who do no overtime will receive the biggest rises.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, said comparing the nurses' award with that of junior doctors was not comparing like with like. "The policy is not 2 per cent for nurses, the policy is locally negotiated pay."

He would not be drawn on the likely size of local awards. He said the 2 per cent national rise was a floor from which local negotiations could start. "You will not find me offering any central norm on what local pay should be. That should be left to local negotiations."

Defending the size of the increases to junior doctors he said: "They are an example of pay being targeted at specific pressure points to ease shortages."

Mr Dorrell defended the staging of the pay award to doctors and dentists, which is expected to save £30 million. "If you spend money on staff salaries you have less money for growth in activity," he said.

Top civil servants may get 11% more

BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON, WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

SOME civil servants could have an 11 per cent pay rise this year under a new performance-related pay structure.

The Review Body on Senior Salaries recommended that pay increases for about 3,000 top civil servants should range from nothing for "unsatisfactory performers" to 11 per cent for the few assessed as "truly exceptional".

Greater flexibility in order to attract senior managers from the private sector lies behind the new system. From April, individual government departments will determine pay increases, thus limiting the role of the review body, which will in future recommend only broad bandings.

A 3 per cent rise in the maximum payable to permanent secretaries will allow the Government to offer up to £154,500 to recruits from the private sector. The minimum

for the 40 or so top civil servants at permanent secretary level will remain £90,000. The new structure is designed to allow "outstanding performers" to move from the bottom of the band to the top in five or six years.

In reality, no one at present is anywhere near the top. Although some agency chief executives, including Derek Lewis, the former head of the Prison Service, have been paid more than £130,000, the highest paid officer in the traditional Civil Service is Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary. He is paid £118,000. Sir Terry Burns, Permanent Secretary at the Treasury, is paid £110,000.

The overall Civil Service pay bill is expected to fall by 7 per cent as staff numbers fall. The pay for about 1,500 judges is to be raised by 3.9 per cent, and the Lord Chief Justice's will rise to £127,237.

JUDICIARY		
	Current	New
Group One: Lord Chief Justice	124,138	127,217
Group Two: Lords of Appeal, Master of the Rolls, Lord President of Court of Session	114,674	117,642
Group Three: Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Justice of Appeal, Inner House Judges of Court of Session, President of Family Division, Vice-Chancellor	110,137	112,791
Group Four: High Court Judges, Outer House Judges of Court of Session	89,957	100,511
Group Five: Official referees, Group Six: Circuit Judges, Group Seven: Chairmen of Industrial Tribunals and magistrates	85,241	85,778
	72,524	73,537
	59,527	60,270

	No in post	Current	New
Permanent secretary level	35	90-150,000	90-154,500
Grade Two (deputy secretaries)	113	67-99,000	67-100,500
Grade Three (under secretaries)	480	55-82,500	55-85,000

	Current rates	Rate 1-4-96	Rate 1-12-96
House Officer	22,552	23,639	23,894
Senior House Officer	21,530	22,137	22,457
Registrar	23,058	23,811	24,131
Senior Registrar	40,738	42,557	42,987
Consultant	52,440	53,910	54,430
General practitioners	45,188	46,540	46,779

* The annual salary for doctors in training comprises a basic rate of pay plus additional study hours, paid at the rate appropriate to their contracted hours of work. The rates shown are based on the maximum number of hours permitted under the hours controls of the House Officer for a special shift of 48 hours a week.

† Average intended net remuneration.

Grade	Salary point from 1/4/96	Salary point from 1/12/96
1	12,542	13,495
2	13,089	13,939
3	13,636	14,383
4	14,183	14,827
5	14,730	15,271
6	15,277	15,715
7	15,824	16,159
8	16,371	16,603
9	16,918	17,047
10	17,465	17,491
11	18,012	17,935
12	18,559	18,379
13	19,106	18,823
14	19,653	19,267
15	20,200	19,711
16	20,747	20,155
17	21,294	20,599

School Group	Salary range 1-4-96	Salary range 1-12-96
Very small primary	25,125-29,610	25,371-30,201
Small/medium primary	27,114-32,984	27,378-33,285
Medium/large primary	29,810-36,600	30,201-37,047
Medium secondary	33,498-42,008	33,825-42,417
Large secondary	35,019-43,529	35,351-43,999
2,000-plus pupils	42,535-55,032	43,369-55,565

Teachers' unions fear bigger classes and job cuts

BY JOHN O'LEARY AND DAVID CHARTER

THE phased pay award for teachers of 3.75 per cent brought predictions of further increases in class sizes, redundancies and shortages of staff in key subjects.

Teachers will get a 2.75 per cent rise in April, with a further 1 per cent in December. The award will be worth 3.1 per cent over the full year and cost an estimated £346 million.

Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, accepted the pay review body's recommendation of a bigger increase in starting salaries to attract more graduates. Entrants to the profession will be paid £14,001 by the end of the year, a rise of 4.88 per cent.

Mrs Shephard accepted all

Tax-cutting Government accused of giving with one hand and taking with the other

the main recommendations in the review body's report, but decided to pay the award in stages to ease the strain on school budgets. "I believe this is a fair settlement which reflects the continuing need to ensure that the profession attracts, retains and motivates individuals of the required quality."

Head teachers said the phasing was outrageous and the overall increase would do nothing to raise morale. Local authorities and governors said many schools would not be able to afford the increase without shedding teaching posts and raising class sizes.

The review body made several recommendations to make teachers' pay more flexible, encouraging governors to reward good performance. The pay spine will be lengthened with the addition of half points between each grade.

From next year, extra payments for heads and deputies will be reviewed against "performance criteria" agreed with governors. The review body did not support Mrs Shephard's suggestion that incentives should be introduced to encourage teachers to take jobs in difficult schools.

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, said 74

of the 119 local authorities would have less to spend on education next year after paying for the teachers' pay rise, despite budget promises of more money for schools.

"The Government is being dishonest over school funding," he said. "Ministers must now explain how increased class sizes and cuts in teaching posts, books and equipment can be avoided. It is irresponsible for ministers to accept the recommendations of the review body and then to pass the buck to a local level."



Shephard: says the settlement is fair

Authorities. Graham Lane, who chairs the education committee, said: "The pay review body recommended 3.75 per cent with no phasing in an attempt to head off a recruitment crisis and also to improve retention. Instead



Blunkett: attack on ministers' dishonesty

teachers will feel they have got a bad deal which lowers morale, and class sizes will rise because schools will not be able to afford extra staff to deal with rising rolls."

The National Union of Teachers accused the Govern-

ment of robbing teachers at the top of the pay scale of £10 a month by phasing in their pay rise. Doug McAvoy, the general secretary, said: "The little that has been given will mean teacher job losses and an inevitable further rise in class sizes to the detriment of children. Instead of leaving schools to struggle to meet the increase the Government should accept responsibility for funding the award in full."

The last time the Government provided cash for the teachers' pay rise was during the run-up to the 1992 general election. Pupil numbers will rise by 86,000 in the new school year, adding to a 6 per cent rise since 1990 when the 439,500 teachers was the same as the current figure.

Nigel De Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and

Union of Women Teachers, said: "Only last November, Chancellor Kenneth Clarke was busy handing out tax concessions. Today we are told the Government cannot afford to pay its salary bill on time. Another case of giving with one hand and taking back with the other."

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers told the review body that a rise of at least 7.5 per cent was needed to attract the best graduates. Peter Smith, the general secretary, predicted further redundancies among teachers because of the Government's refusal to fund the award.

The Association of County Councils said the award would mean authorities having to find an extra £275 million over the £100-million they were already spending above the budget limits.

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Jailed activist was denied access to a solicitor

Republican wins £15,000 from human rights court

BY RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

A LEADING republican activist, who was jailed for eight years for his part in helping to falsely imprison an RUC informer, was awarded £15,000 costs by European Union human rights judges yesterday.

The judges ruled that John Murray's human rights were violated because he was refused access to a solicitor while being questioned about abetting the detention of an IRA volunteer who had turned informer. The ruling is likely to lead to changes in legal practice in Northern Ireland, where exclusion of solicitors from interviews is allowed.

But the European Court of Human Rights found in favour of curbs on the right to silence operating in Northern Ireland. They voted by 14 to five against Murray's claim that his right to a fair hearing

had been infringed because the trial judge had drawn an "adverse inference" from Murray's silence during questioning and at the trial.

The decision to award costs to Murray, who played a dominant role in the incident, was criticised by Unionist MPs, who said it was "bereft of credibility".

Murray, 44, from Greeshough Park, West Belfast, was jailed in 1991 after being convicted of aiding and abetting the false imprisonment of Sandy Lynch, an RUC informer. Among others jailed with Murray for their part in the incident was Danny Morrison, the former Sinn Féin publicity director.

The court rejected Murray's claim for compensation and cut his original claim for £36,000 costs by more than half after an appeal by lawyers representing the Government. The judges ruled by 12

votes to seven that the absence of Murray's solicitor from 12 interviews infringed his right to defence, which is safeguarded by the European Human Rights Convention.

Murray, who destroyed a tape recording of Mr Lynch's confession when police surrounded a house where he had been interrogated, stayed silent through all his police interviews. The judges said that the right to silence was at the heart of fair procedure under the Human Rights Convention. The question of whether those rights were breached by drawing "adverse inferences" from an accused's silence depended on the circumstances of each case.

In the court's view, having regard to the weight of the evidence against the applicant, the drawing of inferences from his refusal at arrest, during police questioning and at trial to provide an explanation

for his presence at the house was a matter of common sense and could not be regarded as unfair or unreasonable in the circumstances.

But the judgment said that, because Murray chose to be silent, it was all the more important that he should have had access to a solicitor. "To deny access to a lawyer for the first 48 hours of police questioning, in a situation where the rights of the defence may well be irretrievably prejudiced is - whatever the justification for such denial - incompatible with the rights of the accused," it said.

John Wadham, director of Liberty, said: "This decision will mean that suspects interrogated under the terrorist legislation will no longer be prevented from seeing their lawyers for the first two days of their detention."

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Neil Fingleton with two classmates, Stephen Robinson, left, and Bill Nixon

Basketball boy aims high

BY STEPHEN FARRELL

A 7ft 11in schoolboy who eats six Shredded Wheat for breakfast is aiming for a basketball career in America after being called up by Britain's national under-16 squad.

Neil Fingleton, 15, of Gosgate, Durham, is still growing but already he can touch a 10ft basketball rim from a standing position. He took up the game only 15

months ago with the adult Stockton Mohawks' team after a member spotted him playing football.

His height causes problems buying clothes and sports shoes - he takes size 13 - but he hopes it will be his passport to the NBA league in America. He said: "Obviously height is a great advantage but you still have to have good control."

Neil comes from a tall family - his mother, Chris-

tine, a cook, is 6ft, and father, Mike, a fitter, is 6ft 11in. However to achieve his dream he must add at least two stone to his 14st frame.

A nutritionist has drawn up a 4,000 calories a day diet, including four pints of milk. Neil's food bill is £50 a week. Tony Hanson, the Mohawks' coach and a former NBA player, said: "I'm sure the schools and colleges in the US are going to be interested."

Diplomats used dead girl's cash

The family of a girl killed by a car during a school trip to France condemned Foreign Office officials who took cash from her bag to pay for the return of her effects.

A letter told the parents of Lindsey Rockcliffe, 13, in Leeds: "The sum of £210 has been deducted to cover postage by recorded delivery."

They said it was "disgusting". The Foreign Office said: "We quite understand the family's reaction. However, this procedure is normal."

Driver fined £1

Police condemned magistrates at Aldershot for fining a drink-driver £1. Christopher Walker, of Crowthorne, Buckinghamshire, was banned from driving for one year. He was 1mg over the 80mg limit.

Ferry port closed

Ferry services were disrupted after striking French workers closed the port of Calais. Ferries from Dover to Calais were diverted to Zeebrugge, adding 2½ hours to the journey.

Traffic jam

Traffic wardens have been wrongly booking cars in Bideford, Devon, unaware that a two-hour limit was scrapped in 1986. Police are offering refunds to proven victims.

Cycle path prize

The 140-mile Sea to Sea cycle path across northern England has won the Global British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award. It is the first British entry to win the prize, set up six years ago.

Homes sell faster

The average time taken to sell a house has fallen from 22 weeks to 21 in the past year, according to the Black Horse estate agents. The North West takes longest (30 weeks) and the South East shortest (13).

Woman rescued

A 75-year-old woman was rescued by a lifeboatman and his son after being thrown into the harbour in Broadstairs, Kent, when her battery-operated wheelchair went out of control.

Alcoholic lemonades renamed

BY ROBIN YOUNG

THE makers of carbonated alcoholic drinks are to rename them in advance of publication of a "voluntary code of practice" intended to avoid confusion between alcoholic drinks and those intended for children.

Bass said yesterday that it would abbreviate the name Hooper's Hoosh Alcoholic Lemonade to Alcoholic Lemonade. Merrydown, producer of Two Dogs Alcoholic Lemonade, is to rename the drink Two Dogs Alcoholic Lemon Brew. The changes are to be made as soon as present stocks are exhausted.

Whitbread has abandoned plans to launch alcoholic carbonates under the names of Lemonade Bomb and Cream Soda Blast. Instead, the drinks, containing as much alcohol as strong lagers, will be called Lemon Jag and Vanilla Heist.

Councils to crack down on roadside polluters

BY NICK NOTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

DRIVERS who run their engines while parked at the roadside will be fined under anti-pollution powers being given to local authorities. The Department of Transport announced yesterday that it was backing councils' calls for more weapons in the war against dirty vehicles.

Steven Norris, the Transport Minister, said council staff would also be given the right to fine drivers or ban vehicles if they failed roadside emissions tests. It is hoped that increasing councils' powers will lead to greater success in the fight against grossly polluting lorries, taxis, cars and coaches.

Local authorities had also asked to be allowed to stop vehicles as well as test and penalise them, but were opposed by groups such as the Automobile Association which argued that only police officers

had the training for such a task. The view was endorsed by the Home Office and has been accepted by transport ministers.

Mr Norris said: "These measures are part of our commitment to improving local air quality. This is an important move forward, allowing local authorities to take action where it is most necessary. There is no reason why a selfish minority of vehicle owners should allow their vehicles to pollute our streets."

He said it was hoped to bring in the new regulations later this year after trials in pilot areas. A spokesman for the department said the new powers would take into account the need for some commercial vehicles with frozen or chilled foods to keep their engines running.

Tourist coaches would have to be dealt with sensitively. "If

it is a hot day and a coach has elderly passengers on board, then they might need to run the air conditioning," he said.

The new pollution measures coincide with an Environment Department announcement that more than 80 local authorities, including all those in London, are to pilot air quality initiatives. The councils will be asked to outline their plans to curb air pollution incidents that break national and European rules.

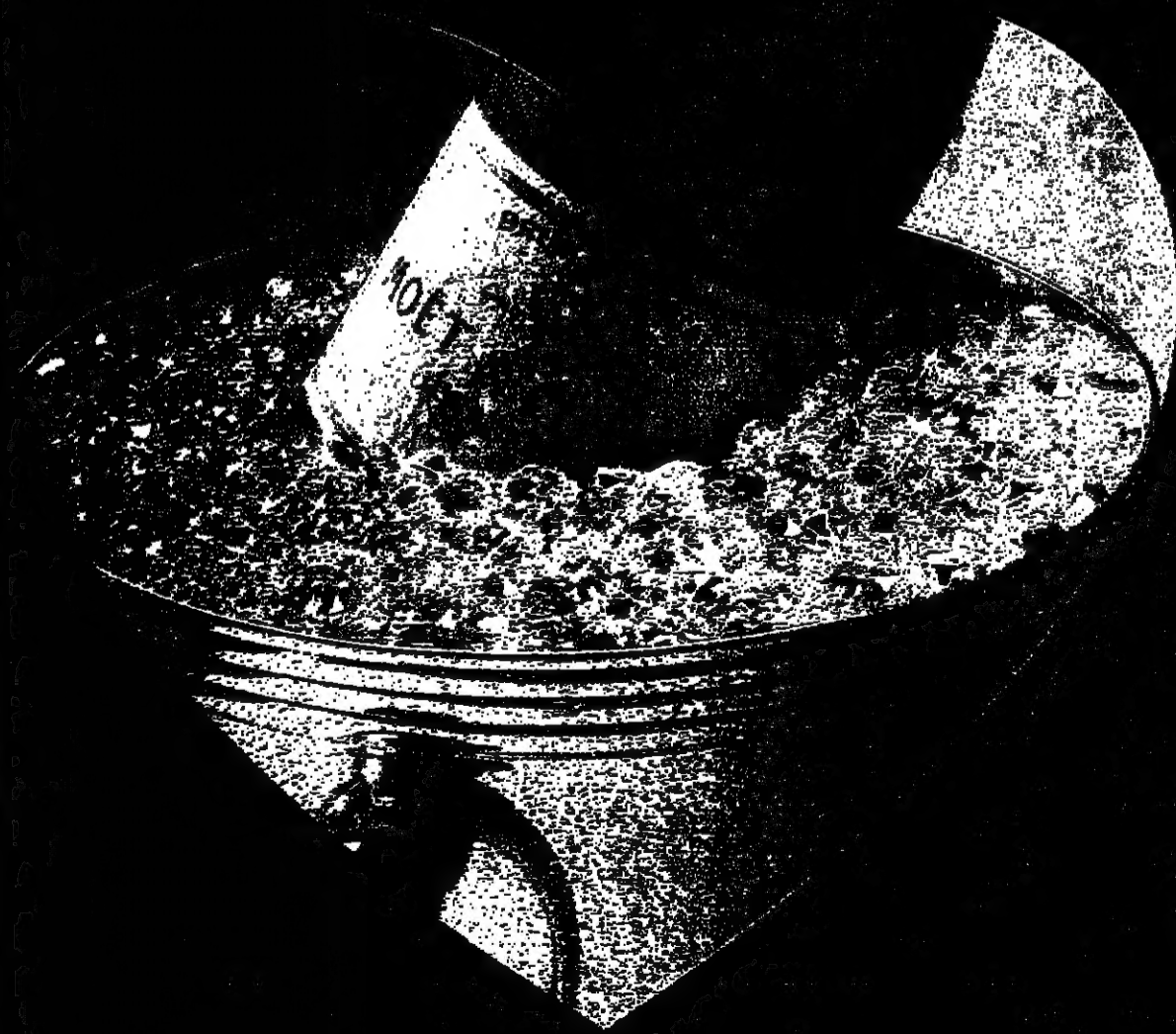
A spokesman for the department said it would be looking for long-term solutions, such as pedestrianisation schemes. Several will be selected and given funding to carry improvements forward to see whether their action plans are workable.

In 1997, all local authorities will be required to meet new air pollution rules under the Environment Act 1995.

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Visit helps to erase ugly memories of papal mission to war-torn region in 1983

Thousands flock to welcome Pope on Latin America tour

By DAVID ADAMS IN CARACAS AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE Pope's Latin American tour, which ends in Venezuela at the weekend, is helping to erase ugly memories of his first visit to the region in 1983, when Central America was torn by civil wars.

Governments and revolutionaries were locked in power struggles fanned by the Cold War. In Nicaragua, the Sandinista Government tried to embarrass the Pope, shouting him down at an outdoor rally. In Guatemala, a military dictator sent six people to the firing squad just before the Pope's arrival.

This week, however, the pontiff has been met by large and friendly crowds in Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador. The armed conflicts that raged in Central America have been extinguished in all but Guatemala.

The region is now battling crime, poverty and social injustice, while the radicalism that the Pope encountered on his last visit has been overtaken by a wave of conservatism. Celebrating Mass before 150,000 worshippers in Managua, the Pope expressed happiness at changes that have brought peace to Nicaragua, but alluded to the Sandinista Government's reign as a "long, dark night". The left-wing Sandinistas ruled from 1979 until losing elections to President Chamorro in 1990.

The Pope told worshippers that during his 1983 trip "I

could not really meet the people. Since then, many things have changed."

For their part, the Sandinistas apologised for their behaviour in 1983. The former President, Daniel Ortega, leader of the Sandinista Front, took out full-page advertisements in two newspapers and rented billboards to welcome the pontiff.

President Chamorro's term ends after an October election this year and she is not allowed to run again. The opposition Sandinistas remain the largest and best organised of Nicaragua's 30 political parties.

"Thanks to divine providence, peace has returned to your country," the Pope told the crowds who attended the Mass. "The inhabitants of Nicaragua can now enjoy an authentic religious freedom."

As he departed, the Pope challenged the Managua Government and foreign donors to attack poverty, ignorance and joblessness in one of the continent's poorest nations. President Chamorro, wearing a cross with her long white dress, escorted the pontiff hand-in-hand. A devout Catholic, she called the Pope's visit a dream come true.

It was El Salvador's turn to welcome the Pope yesterday. Hours before dawn, tens of thousands of pilgrims began streaming into a field in the capital for an open-air Mass.

"Pope John Paul II, we love you," people chanted as the Pope landed at a military airport east of the capital. The flags of El Salvador and the Vatican flew from the cockpit.

There was a heavy police and military presence throughout San Salvador, and crowds gathered along the Pope's six-mile route from the airport. The pontiff was greeted by President Calderón Sol, who knelt to kiss his hand as a military band played.

Last April the Vatican named the conservative Fernando Sáenz Lacalle as Archbishop of San Salvador.

His appointment marks a radical shift from his predecessors who ministered during the country's decade-long civil war. The most notable of those was Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, whose name was associated with liberation theology, the radical grassroots Catholic church movement that was popular in the 1980s.

The archbishop was murdered by a right-wing death squad in 1980 after speaking out against the country's poverty and social injustice.

But Monsignor Sáenz Lacalle shares the Pope's dislike for controversial liberation theology, calling it a "reading of the gospel with a Marxist leaning".

He has said that such a religious philosophy has no place in El Salvador.



The Pope, making his second visit to Nicaragua, celebrates Mass in Managua with thousands of worshippers

Succession debate resumes in Rome

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE sight of the Pope obviously suffering in the heat of Central America in his heavy vestments has added to concern in Rome over his deteriorating health.

It emerged yesterday that the Pope undertook the trip — his 69th since being enthroned — against the advice of Vatican doctors, who were anxious about the debilitating effect of such a gruelling journey on the increasingly frail pontiff. At Christmas the

Pope suffered an attack of nausea during his seasonal message and faltered to a stop. At 75 the Pope is no longer the athletic figure who took over with such vigour 17 years ago, joking that he was not only the first Polish Pope but also the first one who could ski.

He now looks exhausted and moves slowly and stiffly, in part due to illness and in part to the continuing effects of the 1981 assassination attempt. In the Pope's absence, speculation has again risen over the papal succession, with attention focusing on the 68-year-

old Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini. Hopes for a Third World Pope rest on Cardinal Francis Arinze of Nigeria, 63.

Vatican sources point out that fears for the Pope's health when he toured Asia and Australia last year proved to be unfounded. The Pope intends to visit Slovenia in May, when he will turn 76. He also plans to visit Berlin, Budapest and Paris this year, and has said that he hopes to climb Mount Sinai together with Jewish and Muslim leaders to greet the millennium.



Cardinal Arinze: kindles hope of Third World Pope

Israeli banks attacked over £3bn loans in kibbutz rescue package

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

TWO Israeli Cabinet Ministers yesterday demanded an inquiry into allegations that in recent years banks overcharged many of the country's 270 kibbutzim for loans, which the central bank estimates to be worth £3.25 billion.

Reports said that without the financing, at least 100 of the

communes would have gone into liquidation. The vast sum involved forced the central bank to deny a report in *Yedioth Ahronot* which claimed that "correcting the mistakes will put the banks' stability in danger". Share prices of banks were hit for the second day.

Bank Leumi, one of the main institutions involved in bailing out the kibbutzim in a joint rescue package reached last year with the

Labour Government, angrily denied the allegations. The United Kibbutz Movement, one of the two main kibbutz groupings, rejected calls to have its debt mountain re-examined; it said any possible bank error would be smaller than the debt-forgiveness package.

The financial rescue plan, the rudiments of which are now coming under scrutiny, was launched as the socialist ideology of the

kibbutz was giving way to privatisation and attempts to increase individual freedoms. Many members were also deserting the kibbutz for life on the outside.

Bank Leumi alleges that the issue is being manipulated by the cash-strapped kibbutzim to squeeze more money out of a Labour Government in the run-up to an election. The daily *Maariv*, in criticising the controversial rescue

package, said it was "a desperate attempt to preserve a socialist way of life in a world where socialism has become, at best, a bad joke."

The paper argued that "the State of Israel has no security, economic or social interest in ensuring the artificial existence of those kibbutzim whose time has passed."

It was only in 1992 that it dawned on most Israelis that the socialist ideals of the kibbutz movement,

first set up on the banks of the River Jordan in 1906, were turning to give way to capitalist realities. Then Elin Zivan, a financially strapped kibbutz on the Golan Heights, raised its communal dining hall and paid wages according to the value of work performed. This infuriated some of the pioneers.

Many analysts back the changes. One member of Elin Zivan said: "I do not want to be a museum."

Briton is seized in Colombia

Bogotá: Left-wing rebels are believed to be holding a Briton, a Dane and a German, seized on a highway northwest of Colombia's capital.

Police last night named the Briton as Philip Hallen. They blamed the National Liberation Army guerrillas for abducting the men at a makeshift roadblock across a remote stretch of the road that links Bogotá with the north-west city of Medellín. The guerrilla group, founded by radical Roman Catholic priests in 1966, specialises in kidnapping. (Reuters)

Birthrate up in France

Paris: Metropolitan France's population reached 58.3 million at the end of 1995, a year in which there was a 2.5 per cent increase in the birthrate after a three-year decline. In all, 529,000 people died, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies. The average fertility rate was 1.7 children per woman of child-bearing age, slightly higher than the 1.65 of the two previous years.

Broadcaster shot in throat

Phnom Penh: Ek Mongkol, 40, a popular announcer on Cambodia's FM Radio 90, was shot in the throat after he left the station. The attack is believed to be politically motivated. The station belongs to Prince Ranariddh, the First Prime Minister. Human rights groups have accused the Government of trying to intimidate the press. (AP)

East Timorese seek asylum

Jakarta: Nine East Timorese, including two women, asked for political protection from Australia hours after entering its Jakarta embassy, apparently seeking asylum. An embassy spokesman said the nine would be staying overnight while discussions continued. (Reuters)

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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 9 1996

RF

BT head rejects network concept

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT
FINANCIAL EDITOR

HOPES that British Telecom might provide a broad-band communications network receded further yesterday. Sir Peter Bonfield, BT's new chief executive, conceded that he did not personally think there would be a single national information superhighway.

The idea of a single fibre-optic network to every household is wrong, he said. Instead, he envisaged a growing patchwork of links between different systems that would evolve at different paces in different places, using mixed technology, possibly including radio and satellites.

The Labour Party has watered down a deal to allow BT earlier access to the entertainment market to justify investment in a superhighway and connect schools, hospitals and libraries free. Sir Peter said BT would still accelerate access to a fibre-optic network for schools and possibly hospitals.

In the third quarter to December 31, BT's pre-tax profits rose 26 per cent to £829 million. Nine-month profits were up 13 per cent to £2.44 billion on turnover up 3.4 per cent to £10.7 billion.

The gain stemmed almost entirely from the timing of redundancy charges. They took £60 million in the quarter against £217 million a year earlier.

The bill for 8,000 job losses should still be about £400 million for the year to March 31, suggesting a final quarter charge above £200 million.

Sir Ian Wallace, the chairman, said there had been an encouraging upturn in domestic call volumes in the quarter. The customer base shrank by 37,000 in the quarter as cable companies took a net 100,000.

Tempos, page 24

United and MAI to merge in £2.9bn deal

By ERIC ROBERTS

THE consolidation of Britain's media industry gathered pace yesterday when United News & Media, the newspaper publisher, and MAI, the television and financial services group, announced a merger that will create an international group with businesses ranging from the *Daily Express* to NOP, the opinion poll group.

The proposed merger, which will create a company with a market capitalisation of £2.9 billion and turnover of £1.9 billion, came the day after United shares rose 29p to 624p on high volume. The London Stock Exchange is examining the pre-announcement trading to determine if there were any unusual share price movements.

Lord Hollick, 51, the managing director of MAI, and Lord Stevens of Ladbroke, 59, the chairman of United, called the merger a marriage of equals.

Unlikely bedfellows...
Pennington...
Stock market...
Global race...

The companies are to come together through a "barter" share swap, which offers no premium to shareholders. A holder of 100 MAI shares will receive 64 United shares, while the holder of 1,000 MAI convertible preference shares will receive 241 United shares. United shares rose 28p to 652p. MAI was up 69p to 448p.

United shareholders will own 50.7 per cent of the new group while MAI shareholders will own 49.3 per cent. It seems that MAI, however, will have overall management control. Lord Hollick is to become chief executive of the group, which has not yet been named. Sir James McKinnon, the chairman of MAI and former head of Ofgas, the gas regulator, is to become deputy chairman. Lord Stevens will be chairman, a position he described as non-executive but full-time.

Both companies said they did not expect a competing bid



Lord Hollick and Lord Stevens yesterday. Both said they did not expect a rival bid to thwart their proposed merger

to spoil the deal. There were rumours that Carlton Communications, the largest ITV company, would bid for United. Carlton would not comment and its shares fell 32p to 1,022p, on the speculation.

The merger was designed to take advantage of the Government's plans to reduce cross-media ownership restrictions. The Broadcasting Bill will allow ITV companies to hold as many ITV licences as they want as long as they do not capture more than 15 per cent

of the total audience. Similarly, newspaper companies with less than 20 per cent of the total national newspaper circulation will be able to buy ITV companies.

The merged company will have two main businesses. The consumer side will include MAI's Meridian, Anglia and Channel 5 interests plus United's national and regional newspapers. It will also have United's advertising publications, including *Exchange & Mart* and *Dailies Weekly*.

The business side will include MAI's money and securities broking companies with the exception of Wagon Finance, a car finance company which is being sold with a price tag of about £100 million. It will also include United's PR Newswire, which provides electronic financial information, NOP, and Miller Freeman, United's magazine publishing and trade conference organiser.

MAI announced a pre-tax profit of £52.7 million for the half year to December 31 against £58.6 million in the previous period. United reported a pre-tax profit of £138 million for the full year to December 31, against £138.2 million previously. After restructuring costs and exceptional items, the 1995 profit was £104.4 million.

United is proposing to pay a second interim dividend of 15.25p, making 23p, unchanged for the year. MAI is to pay a doubled interim dividend of 4p.

Debt cap expected for all names

By SARAH BAGNALL

EVERY one of the 32,000 Lloyd's of London names is expected to have their debt to the insurance market capped at £100,000, according to Lloyd's sources.

The upper limit on a name's liability is struck, however, after deducting any payment or debt write-off the name will receive under Lloyd's ambitious £2.8 billion reconstruction and renewal plan. The limit is calculated after any necessary draw down on a name's funds at Lloyd's, which for many is in the form of bank guarantees against their homes.

Lloyd's is holding back £100 million of the £2.8 billion to help names who cannot afford to pay their final liability bill and is working on a phased payment scheme.

The R&R plan, aimed at resolving the mass of legal actions taken by thousands of names and at providing them with an affordable exit from the insurance market, is in its final stages. The exit route is via Equitas, a reinsurance company being set up to take over names' liabilities in return for a payment.

Of the package, £2 billion will be used to write off names' debts — in cases when they cannot afford to pay them — while the remaining £800 million is to compensate names for their losses.

On Wednesday the Ridley Committee, chaired by Sir Adam Ridley, reported to the Lloyd's ruling council its methodology for dividing the £2 billion of debt write-offs and £800 million between the different classes of names.

Lloyd's plans to send the committee's conclusions to names next week. This will be followed next week by statements from Lloyd's "indicating" each name's share of the £2.8 billion as well as their Equitas bill.

Calls for an investigation to be launched into Lloyd's were made yesterday in the House of Lords. Lord Marlesford said he was a victim of the losses incurred at Lloyd's and questioned whether it had been "wholly frank" with the DTI about assets it had to cover insolvencies.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FT-SE 100	3704.4	(-17.7)
Yield	3.85%	
FT-SE All share	1855.35	(-8.08)
Nikkei	21118.30	(+174.31)
Dow Jones	5484.54	(-7.58)
S&P Composite	948.71	(+0.22)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(5 1/8%)
Long Bond	7 7/8%	(102 1/2)
Yield	6 1/8%	(6 1/8%)
STERLING		
New York	1.5378	(1.5378)
London	1.5389	(1.5389)
DM	2.2682	(2.2715)
FF	7.7629	(7.8000)
SP	1.5529	(1.5530)
Yen	164.21	(162.67)
India	84.3	(84.4)
DOLLAR		
London	1.4789	(1.4770)
DM	1.5035	(1.5065)
SP	1.5035	(1.5065)
Yen	106.58	(106.08)
S index	86.1	(86.8)
Tokyo close Yen 106.16		
NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Apr)	£16.15	(\$16.10)
OIL		
London close	\$48.05	(\$412.75)
* denotes midday trading price		

Second look at funding of investor scheme

By CAROLINE MERRILL

THE Personal Investment Authority is reviewing the funding of the investors' Compensation Scheme for the second time in six months.

It has already drawn up plans to change substantially the funding of the ICS, which has been dogged by controversy over the past few years. This latest consultation paper is a further attempt to try to ensure the long-term viability of the scheme.

The ICS was set up by the Government to protect investing members of the public against the failure or fraud of a particular investment company. Most firms declared in default of the ICS have been independent financial advisers. The structure of the scheme meant that the remaining IFAs and the companies that transacted most of their business through IFAs had to pay the compensation bill. The result was that good firms ended up paying for the actions of the bad.

The ICS reached a crisis last year when Sun Life secured a judicial review of this funding arrangement. The uncertainty forced the Treasury to offer a £17 million lifeline.

After this, the ICS proposed the introduction of a pre-funding arrangement, under which all PIA members would pay an annual subscription totalling £15m to cushion against losses.

The paper issued yesterday puts forward a suggestion under which all PIA members would contribute to the scheme according to size. This proposal is likely to anger the banks and building societies, which maintain they have their own compensation arrangements.

Standard Life stance hurts Farnell's £1.8bn bid plan

By ALAN SUGAR

FARNELL, the electronics distribution company, yesterday suffered a setback in its £1.8 billion bid to buy Premier Industrial, the US-based company, when Standard Life, one of its main institutional shareholders, revealed it would not support the proposals.

The Premier purchase has aroused controversy since it was announced last month because it would result in Farnell more than doubling its size and lead to a big increase in the company's debt pile.

Graham Wood, head of UK equities at Standard Life, justified the decision on the grounds that the fund management group believes the premium is too high, that the deal would dilute earnings and that Farnell will be encumbered with £430 million worth of

debt. But the company's unusual decision to publicise its position, angered Howard Poulson, chairman of Farnell.

Mr Poulson said: "We are very disappointed that Standard Life has rather jumped the gun. We only had a short meeting with Standard Life in which to put our case."

But Mr Poulson remained confident that the deal would still be approved, stating that he believed the overwhelming majority of shareholders still supported the deal.

Guy Jubb, corporate governance manager at Standard Life, defended the decision to go public, ahead of the extraordinary general meeting next week.

He said: "We feel it is right that we make our position clear so other shareholders

can see what we are doing. The Premier deal has created a lot of interest in the media."

He added that Standard Life did not want to sell its stake in Farnell although a sale remained the ultimate sanction.

But Standard Life's views appeared not to be shared by other big shareholders such as Mercury Asset Management, who announced yesterday that it had increased its stake in the company from 12.1 per cent to 13 per cent.

Another large shareholder, Scottish Widows, which holds 5.3 per cent, said it was backing the deal.

Farnell's share price slipped back 3p to 642p.

Pennington, page 25
Finding their voice, page 25

Amstrad confident despite losses



Alan Sugar, chairman, remains chirpy

AMSTRAD, the electronics group that announced 130 redundancies earlier this week, has disclosed first-half losses of £5.4 million. But the interim dividend is increased to 1.25p a share from 1p.

As a result, Alan Sugar, chairman and largest single shareholder, can expect to take home about £510,000 in dividend payments. He is also paid an annual salary of £195,000.

The company said the increase in dividend was meant as a signal to investors that Amstrad is turning the corner. Mr Sugar said he expects Dancall, Amstrad's mobile phone manufacturing subsidiary, to make a healthy profit in the second half.

Earlier this week, Amstrad said it would restructure, cut its workforce — mainly in Amstrad Consumer Electronics (ACE) — by 150 and close one of its factories, costing it £4 million.

The company made a £25,000 profit in the corresponding period last year, and Tony Dean, finance director, said: "It is obviously disappointing to be in the red this half. We don't expect to make any further provisions for

restructuring, and we hope to see some strength now."

Viglen International, which sells computers in the professional market, was profitable in the six months to December 31, while Dancall, bought by Amstrad in 1993, had made a "respectable profit" in December as it overcame a delay of four months in meeting production levels. Mr Sugar said that the full-year results should, therefore, be encouraging.

Analysts cut their full-year profit forecasts from between £15 million and £20 million to nearer £10 million. However, the roster picture for the second half and next year pushed the share price higher, rising 18p to 201p.

"The results weren't very good, but there is plenty of room for them to grow again," said Andrew Bryant, analyst with NatWest Securities. "ACE should be back in profit in 1997, the Viglen market is growing and there is confidence that Dancall could become a real competitor to the likes of Nokia and Ericsson."

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Business start-ups increase

The number of businesses in the UK reached 3.7 million in 1995, the highest level for more than four years. According to Barclays Bank, the total business stock increased 1.6 per cent over 1994.

The bank's figures show that 448,000 sole occupation businesses started up in 1995, compared with 430,000 in 1994, an increase of four per cent. Mainstream business closures rose two per cent year-on-year to 440,000. The main growth was in individuals setting up in self-employment on top of full-time occupation.

TI venture

TI GROUP, through its Bundy Asia Pacific joint venture, is to invest \$3 million in a new factory in China to supply components for a new car plant set up by Citroën, the French company, in Wuhan, Hubei province, where it is to produce its ZX model.

French cut

The Bank of France yesterday cut its key intervention rate, which sets the floor for money market interest rates, to 3.90 per cent from 4.05 per cent. The five-to-ten day lending rate was unchanged at 5.60 per cent.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buy	Bank Sell
Australia \$	2.13	1.97
Austria Sch	13.99	12.49
Belgium Fr	48.72	45.43
Canada \$	2.52	2.04
Cyprus Cyp	0.791	0.708
Denmark Kr	6.41	5.81
Finland Mk	7.98	6.89
France Fr	6.22	7.57
Germany DM	2.43	2.22
Greece Dr	366.00	371.00
Hong Kong \$	12.50	11.50
Italy Lit	1.02	0.94
Israel NIS	8.2000	4.9500
Italy Lit	2095.00	2075.00
Japan Yen	176.30	162.30
Malta	0.594	0.539
Netherlands Gld	2.598	2.408
New Zealand \$	2.43	2.21
Norway Kr	10.80	9.70
Portugal Esc	247.00	228.50
S. Africa Rd	rel.	5.34
Spain Ptas	166.00	156.00
Sweden Kr	11.35	10.38
Switzerland Fr	1.89	1.81
Turkey Lira	rel.	654.00
USA \$	1.61	1.501

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to interest charges. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Latest salvoes fired in the battle over single currency

Business leaders lambaste EMU

By PATRICIA TEHAN

SOME of the UK's most senior business leaders have launched a scathing attack on European monetary union, arguing it would bring higher interest rates and unemployment and harm business competitiveness.

The criticism came from Sir Stanley Kalms, chairman of Dixons, Sir John Hoskyns, chairman of Burton, Sir Alick Rankin, chairman of Scottish & Newcastle, Sir Michael Edwards, chairman of Charter, Sir Emmanuel Kaye,

chairman of Kaye Enterprises, Stanislas Yassukovich, chairman of the City Research project, and Tim Melville-Ross, director-general of the Institute of Directors.

Their stance against economic and monetary union (EMU) was in stark contrast to the sentiments expressed by Dr Ronaldo Schmitz, chairman of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, yesterday. He said that stopping the introduction of EMU would have disastrous implications for the single market and for Europe's position in the world. The

business leaders were writing in *Business Agenda*, a publication by the centre-right European Research Group.

Sir Stanley said business "must now gird its loins and fight with eerie weapon ... against those who seek to sell out the UK to a federal Europe". Sir John questioned whether the single currency was conceivable without European unification, while Sir Alick said that to join EMU "we must meet tough convergence criteria, pay up a huge entrance fee and put on a monetary corset". There is

growing consensus among British bankers that the deadline for the introduction of a single currency in 1998 should be delayed until economic criteria are in place.

On Monday Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, said proceeding too quickly towards a single currency could cause serious political tensions. But at the German-British Chamber of Commerce yesterday, Dr Schmitz said: "Stopping the EMU train would spell disaster. It would mean running the risk of the hard core

of the European Monetary System breaking apart." This, he said, would mean that "continental Europe" would fall back into recurring competitive devaluations, with negative repercussions for the development of the single market as a whole.

Dr Schmitz said: "I would like to see the UK exert a much greater influence over the design of the EU economic framework". If sterling did not rejoin the exchange-rate mechanism by spring this year, it would not be eligible for EMU in 1998, he added.



David Southworth, managing director, with John Atkin, finance director, of P&P Group, where profits rose 57 per cent to £12.6 million in the year to November 30. There is a final dividend of 2p, payable on May 11, making a total of 3.15p (2.6p)

CBI calls on Blair to spell out policies

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BUSINESS leaders last night said that Britain's economic strengths must not be jeopardised by a Labour government uncommitted to stable economic policies.

Although Adam Turner, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, welcomed the shifts in Labour policy towards a more pro-business approach under Tony Blair, the CBI challenged Labour to provide specific details for business on a range of economic policies.

Government ministers were angered when Mr Turner recently advocated a rise in real wages as part of economic growth, and some are sceptical about the CBI's declared policy under Mr Turner of political neutrality in the run-up to a general election, arguing openly that business ought to support the Conservatives.

But they will be more satisfied by Mr Turner's clear attempt last night in a speech at a CBI dinner in Manchester to put pressure on Labour to flesh out the bones of its policies on the economy and business.

Mr Turner praised the UK's stable macroeconomy, low inflation and flexible labour markets as a "sound basis for medium-term growth", and in a specific reference to Labour and the election said: "It is

crucial that these advantages are not put at risk."

He said: "While the Labour party has made some apparent shifts in policy towards a more pro-business approach, there are key areas where business disagrees with Labour policy."

Business was concerned about four specific areas:
□ Inflation: Welcoming Labour's "overall" commitment to low inflation, he said: "Business confidence would increase if Labour committed itself to a specific inflation target."

□ Tax: Labour should set specific targets for the top rate of tax and National Insurance, and clearly stated spending priorities.

□ Social chapter: Emphasising the support of business for the Government's opt-out from the EU social chapter, he said that business "does not want to see it ended. We are very concerned about the Labour party's commitment to do so" — and would be even more so if Labour supported extending qualified majority voting in the EU in this area.

□ Stakeholding: Having launched the word into the political domain, Mr Blair must now clarify it and say what specific policy issues would result from it.

Retail sales continue to rise

By OUR INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

RETAIL sales are still rising, according to figures today from British Industry on sales volumes in the high street.

The Confederation of British Industry's monthly distributive trades survey shows continuing strong sales growth in January after early sales activity the previous month.

The CBI's survey, covering 15,000 outlets in retailing, wholesaling and the motor trades, shows that retail sales have now risen on an annual basis for four successive

months, after a year of uneven volume growth.

In January, the balance of retailers reporting an increase in sales volumes — those registering a rise against those recording a fall — stayed at 31 per cent. Annual sales this month are expected to continue to rise, at a slightly higher rate.

Trade in the high street in January was above average for the time of year for the second month running, and while stocks were still considered to be more than ade-

quate, retailers expect a slight downturn in levels this month.

Grocers, chemists, and footwear retailers saw the highest rises in sales volumes compared with a year ago, while confectionery, tobacco and newspaper outlets saw their first fall since February 1994.

Alanair Eperon, chairman of the CBI's distributive trades panel, says: "Underlying volumes, as measured by the three-monthly annual trend, have been on an upward path since last September."

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Mersey Docks shares fall as offer rejected

LIVERPOOL dockworkers have rejected an offer from Mersey Docks & Harbour Company worth £8 million to settle an unofficial dispute that closed part of the port for six weeks last year. The dockers, dismissed last September for refusing to cross a picket line, rejected the offer of £20,000 to £25,000 per employee by 271 votes to 50. A spokesman for the Transport & General Workers' Union said a meeting would be held today to discuss further action.

Mersey Docks shares fell 54p to 403p over fears that strikers would seek support from dockers abroad. The dispute cost the company £4 million. Mersey Docks said yesterday that pressure had been put on the dockers to reject the offer. However, the company left open the possibility that employees could still claim their share of the settlement. The strikers were demanding employment for 80 other dockers who were dismissed by a stevedoring company, unconnected with Mersey Docks, which has since gone out of business.

Hanson fall continues

SHARES in Hanson, the Anglo-American diversified industrial conglomerate, fell by 5p to 185p yesterday. At the end of the day 16.32 million shares had been traded. Hanson shares have fallen from 210p since the proposed merger of the company into four separate units was announced last week, reducing its stock market capitalisation by about £1.29 billion to £9.6 billion. Yesterday Standard & Poor's, the credit rating agency, said that the rating of the demerged Hanson businesses was likely to suffer.

US phone merger off

THE planned \$25 billion merger between Bell Atlantic and Nynex, two of America's largest telephone companies, has been put off in favour of a more modest joint venture. The new plan is to set up a joint venture in the long distance telephone market, which would not bring the companies the same massive cost savings as a merger. The Bell Atlantic/Nynex talks have been prompted by the Telecommunication Bill, signed by President Clinton yesterday, which deregulates the market. It would have been the largest merger in US corporate history, but is proving to be too complex to complete.

Zeneca to buy drug

ZENECA has agreed to acquire Glaxo Wellcome's new migraine treatment. Final terms of the deal are still being negotiated. The drug 311C90 is in Phase III trials, the final clinical test stage before a drug can be filed for registration. The global migraine market is expected to be worth £1.5 billion by the year 2000. Glaxo is divesting the product as part of the conditions laid down by the US Federal Trade Commission when the company took over Wellcome last year. Glaxo said the sale process would not interrupt the drug's clinical trial development.

Westminster HC ahead

WESTMINSTER HEALTH CARE, the nursing home and medical services group, said occupancy rates continued to be under pressure. There were regional variations in performance and the company's development programme is likely to be biased towards the South East. In the half year to November 30, the company lifted pre-tax profits to £8 million from £5.3 million. Earnings were 11.1p a share, rising from 9.9p. The interim dividend is increased to 2.35p a share from 2.1p. In August the company raised £33.7 million through a rights issue.

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Speakers will include the key decision makers responsible for all Sydney Olympic contracts: the New South Wales Minister for the Olympics and the Director General of the Olympic Co-ordination Authority. Business opportunities are likely to arise in the following sectors: insurance, banking, engineering, construction, facilities and services.

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dti
Department of Trade and Industry

2000
THE BUSINESS CONNECTION

□ Their Lordships announce a marriage □ Sparks fly at Farnell □ The perils of remaining mutual

MAI presents a United front

□ "THE benefits of synergy" like "one careful owner" or "would suit DIY fanatic" is one of those phrases that should ring alarm bells for potential buyers.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines synergy as "the combined effect of drugs, organs, etc. that exceeds the sum of their individual effects". Corporate financiers define synergy as the easiest way they know to separate over-ambitious management from massive fees.

Lords Stevens and Hollick define synergy, as far as one can tell from yesterday's merger of their respective companies, in two ways. There is the ability to advertise TV stations in newspapers that are within the same holding company, and the corresponding ability to advertise papers on those same TV stations.

Then there is the wrapping up of all the boring but profitable business services within both groups, which tend to miss out on the media attention to the rather seditious TV stations and newspapers, into one operation which can then sell to the same client list. One option is to cross-sell exhibitions, newsletters, market research and specialised business magazines while merging their individual management into the same team.

On top of these, there are rather less well-defined prospects for expansion as a larger group into electronic publishing and other more rarified areas.

The first thought is that MAI and United are swimming against the prevailing tide in creating a cross-media, whisper it who dares, conglomerate, at a time when Hanson and British Gas, albeit for different reasons, are busy unbundling. But media is probably the only area where the creation of a conglomerate makes sense - why else is the Government so concerned with the rules that allow this?

As part of this marriage, MAI gets its hands on the cash flow from rather more mature media businesses within United such as exhibitions, regional papers, periodicals and so on, with which to expand into who knows where. United gets proven management, in the form of Lord, sorry Clive, Hollick and his team and a semblance of a coherent strategy that has never been available for view since it became apparent the

Express titles could not be sold. Note the departure of Graham Wilson, seen as Lord Stevens's right-hand man in the City. Should Stevens and Hollick even come to blows over policy, the betting must be that the latter will prevail.

MAI will not stop here, and the purchase of yet another ITV franchise-holder, perhaps Yorkshire Tyne-Tees, looks the next step. In this they will be taking part in this year's expected carve-up of the ITV map - in competition with Carlton, the chosen buyer of the Express titles until Michael Green lost patience with Lord Stevens.

Some questions for Standard Life

□ WHAT on earth is going on at Farnell, a solid and respectable distributor of all sorts of useful electronic bits and bobs that would not normally trouble the scorer in the great corporate governance handicap?



Two weeks ago Farnell announced a £1.8 billion purchase of an equally uncharismatic but much bigger US business. Part of the deal, ambitious but put together by a team whose record suggested they were ready for such a challenge, was a £350 million rights issue.

Before such an issue can be launched, it is pre-marketed. This involves a trapeze around the biggest institutional holders, and Farnell has at least seven with two per cent or more including Standard Life, to see if they will back the move and underwrite the issue. Just what took place between

Farnell and the institutions is rightly shrouded in secrecy, but there were precious few squawks from any as the underwriting fees were being counted. The deal caused some concern among some large shareholders at the size of the step planned, and the management set out to allay this with, to date, some 60 presentations. But Standard Life was apparently not one of those who expressed such concern.

Now the Scottish institution has taken the unprecedented step of saying it will oppose the deal at next week's extraordinary meeting, even if other institutions with much bigger stakes look like supporting it.

Four questions should be put to Standard Life. Is this, and the weekend assault against Michael Green's salary, just a high-profile public relations exercise, hatched to the fashionable corporate governance bandwagon? Did you initially agree to support the rights? If so, why the subsequent change of heart? And has all of this anything to

do with your wish, frustrated when you were made an insider ahead of the deal, to take profits on some of your stake in Farnell?

Britannia walks a fine line

□ THE first building society to announce a mutual benefits package for members was the National & Provincial. Within months, the society fell victim to the predatory attentions of the Abbey National.

This awful memory does not seem to haunt those societies who have announced similar loyalty schemes since designed to prove their commitment to mutuality. The latest is the Britannia, which has been working on the project since last summer. In the interim the Yorkshire and the Bradford & Bingley have produced schemes to give value to members in the shape of lower mortgage rates and competitive savings deals. Both were against paying divi-

dends, as such payouts depend on future profits. They argued that, if margins were squeezed, the distribution to members would be put in jeopardy.

The Britannia, however, seems set to follow the dividend route, believing that this is the way to persuade its members to buy even more of its products. But there is no guarantee that they will remain true. Aspiring borrowers may still spurn the Britannia if it cannot match the rates available elsewhere.

The Britannia believes that it is acting to safeguard its independence by depleting its reserves. A miscalculation about how much it will pay and in what form could still be fatal.

The real alternative

□ DISTURBING signs that arch-dry Peter Lilley is in danger of going native at the Department of Social Security. Defending job cuts at the DSS, he told the *Today* programme that "the alternative obviously is to take the money away from benefits". A telling slip, Mr Lilley. Individual benefits are fixed, although the total bill may be rising. So you are required to make cuts because the alternative is taking more money off the taxpayer.

Struggling Apple admits Q2 loss will exceed \$69m

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

APPLE Computer, the struggling American personal computer group, expects to incur a bigger loss in the second quarter of its financial year than the \$69 million loss it reported for the first quarter.

Gilbert Amelio, the new chief executive, also said that the company had pulled out of talks with all potential bidders.

The forecast loss is part of a new publicity offensive by the company to clear the decks after a senior management shake-up last week.

Apple is attempting to persuade customers and the stock market that it is still in control of its own destiny after several months of disastrous trading figures, intense takeover speculation, and the departure of Michael Spindler as chief executive a week ago.

Mr Amelio said that the second-quarter loss would be partly the result of further essential restructuring costs

within the company. He said that in spite of the bad financial results, the foundations of Apple's business were sound and that steps the company was taking to turn itself round in the next few months would boost profitability. The company is scheduled to report its second-quarter results in April.

Mr Amelio's denial that



Amelio: pulled out of talks

Apple was in bid talks with any other company appeared to scotch rumours of an imminent takeover by Sun Microsystems with whom Apple has been negotiating recently.

Mr Amelio said that the persistent takeover rumours had damaged Apple's performance and its share price, which is now about \$28, down from \$30 a few months ago.

The company has been taking out full-page advertisements in leading newspapers over the past few days, pointing out its strengths and promising that it can survive independently.

However, analysts believe Mr Amelio has an uphill struggle to salvage Apple's image and convince the public that it can recover from a string of strategic blunders as well as protect its share of the personal computer market, which has shrunk recently from more than 10 per cent to about 8 per cent.

Stakis casino for Ladbroke

LADBROKE, the hotels and betting company, is expanding its casino operations with the £27.5 million purchase of the Barracuda Casino from Stakis, the leisure group (Alasdair Murray writes).

Ladbroke was one of the leading casino operators in the UK until it lost its licence in 1979 for contravening gaming regulations, an action that resulted in a halving of group profits that year. But since 1994, the company

has made a comeback, buying three central London casinos, although it is concentrating on expansion overseas.

Stakis has decided to sell the casino to concentrate on its chain of mid-market provincial casinos. The Barracuda, in Baker Street, is one of central London's largest casinos, with 16 gaming tables. It attracts gamblers who spend £400-£500 a night. In the year to October 1, 1995, it made £27 million on turnover of £45 million.

Stop claims clock, says SIB

THE Securities and Investments Board (SIB) yesterday urged insurers to follow the lead of the Prudential and not to dismiss claims of pension mis-selling because they are late (Sara McConnell writes). The industry's review of cases to uncover and compensate victims has fallen badly behind schedule and SIB was replying to a letter from Bill Day, national pensions officer of the GMB union, expressing concern that many claim-

ants could be barred because of the time factor. Mr Day warned they may be forced to resort to the courts.

SIB told Mr Day: "SIB has no legal power to impose this course [relaxing time limitations]. However, the company which SIB regulates directly, the Prudential, has indicated that it will take this approach and we believe it would be in the best interests of all concerned if others were to give a similar indication."

Britannia to reward members with cash

By Karen Zagor

THE Britannia Building Society plans to reward members with annual cash handouts, adding a new twist to the ways in which societies are rewarding loyal members (Pennington, this page).

Until now, societies have opted to increase savings and cut mortgage rates in an attempt to show members that mutuality is as beneficial in the long run as merging or converting to publicly held banks.

The Britannia's move, expected to be announced officially tomorrow, comes closest to the cash and/or shares rewards offered to members of societies that are merging or converting. The size of the cash incentive will be pegged to the amount a member borrows or saves. The Britannia hopes this will encourage members to use an ever-widening range of products.

The mortgage rate cuts offered by the Yorkshire and Northern Rock societies may appeal to borrowers keen on lower monthly payments, but they are unlikely to convince members to put more money into other products.

Bradford & Bingley, which is reducing its variable lending rate by 0.25 percentage points at the same time as increasing savings rates by an average of 0.25 of a point, is more likely to convince customers to both save and borrow with the society.

The Britannia's cash payments are likely to be popular with savers and borrowers, but the commitment to pay cash every year could become a straitjacket in the future.

News Int notches up £168m profit

By Sarah Cunningham

NEWS INTERNATIONAL, owner of *The Times*, reported first-half profits of £168.9 million yesterday, in spite of a £421 million charge against the closure of *Today*.

In the same period of the previous year, the company made a profit of £561.9 million, but that included a one-off £400.4 million gain on the sale of 20 per cent of its shares in BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster.

The company made an operating profit in the first half, ending December 31 last year, of £76.2 million, an increase of 36 per cent. Its newspapers, which include *The Sunday Times*, *The Sun* and *News of the World*, have continued to strengthen their market position through increased circulation and growth in advertising revenue, it said.

BSkyB, in which News International holds 40 per cent, has

continued to show growth in profitability and in the number of subscribers, which rose from 4.16 million to 5.18 million in the period. News International is a subsidiary of The News Corporation, which on Wednesday reported operating profits of £492 million for the same period.

Leslie Hinton, News International chief executive, said: "We are delighted with these excellent results, achieved in a brutally competitive market. We are especially pleased that we have been able to maintain, and in some cases increase, the circulation of our titles despite the necessity to raise cover prices in response to significantly higher newsprint costs."

The company will pay an interim dividend to special dividend shareholders of 1.68p per share.

Bass hurt by loss in gaming division

By Alasdair Murray

SHARES in Bass, the brewing and leisure company, fell 7p to 736p yesterday after it revealed that profits in its gaming division had fallen 30 per cent because of bad weather and the impact of the National Lottery.

Sir Ian Prosser, chairman, said that earnings in the first 16 weeks of the financial year had grown in line with expectations apart from in the Bass leisure division.

Admissions at the Gala bingo clubs fell 6 per cent, although the average spend rose 25 per cent. Turnover from Coral bookmakers was up 6 per cent but average turnover per shop was down 8 per cent because of the reduced winter racing season.

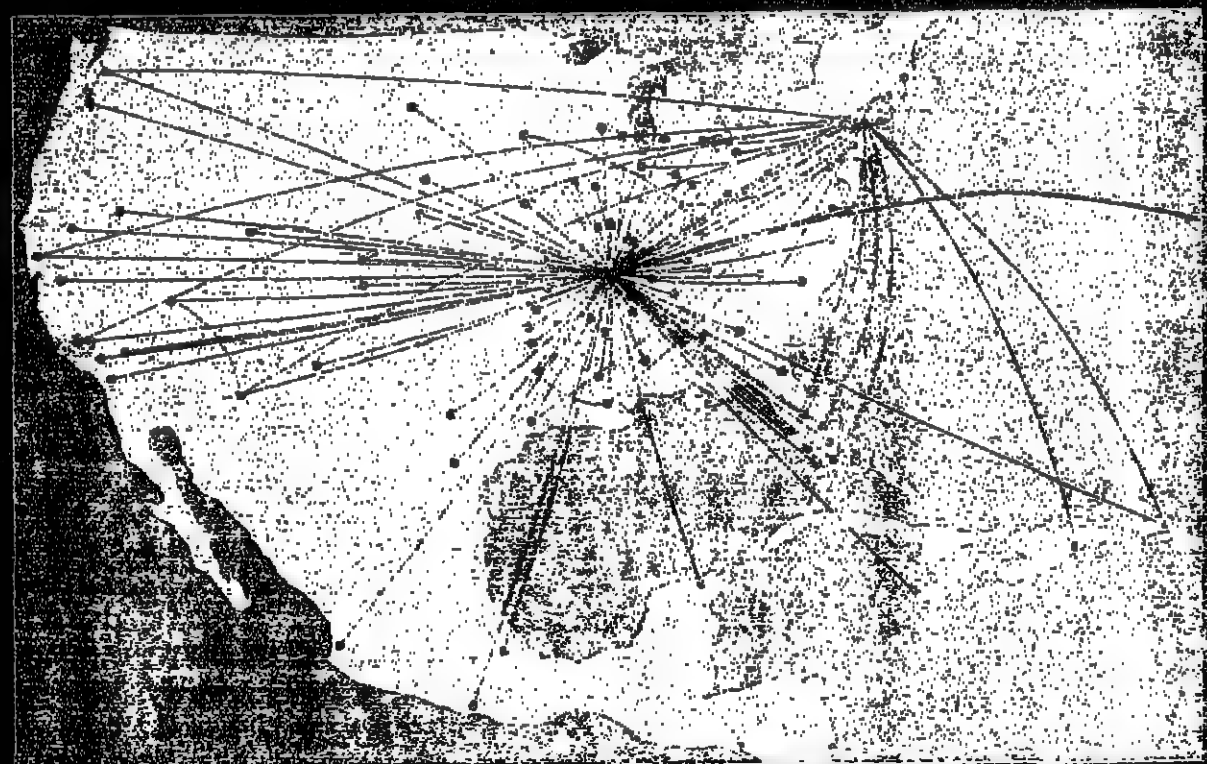
Holiday Inn Worldwide, the hotels division, saw profits rise. Revenue per room rose 4 per cent in the US and 10 per cent in Europe.

Bass Taverns, the company's pub division, operated an increased number of outlets for the first time in four years. Drink takings rose 7 per cent, while food revenues were up 50 per cent and machine revenues increased 2 per cent.

Bass's brewing division increased beer volumes 1 per cent, while off-licence trade rose 10 per cent.

Sir Ian said: "I remain confident that the group will make good progress through the rest of this financial year."

Tempos page 24



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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Paper, pen and digital

NEVER say the President of the United States is not trendy. Jumping on the new technology bandwagon, Bill Clinton yesterday signed the new Telecommunications Bill — which deregulates the entire US phone industry — with a digital pen on a digital pad. Result: the Bill, plus President's signature, went out on the World Wide Web. But was a digital signature legally and constitutionally binding? Unfortunately, the White House did not know. Anyway, no one was taking risks. To be on the safe side, Clinton also signed the Bill in ink on paper. Some things will probably never change.

Poles and holes

THE extrovert London tones of Sir Peter Bonfield are signalling a radical change of a sort at British Telecom. Sir Peter, fresh into the chief executive's seat from ICL, explains that he has spent his first 40 days "up the poles and down the holes" to get to know his new company, as well as meeting regulators in four countries. As it turns out, Sir Peter has not had enough safety training to be allowed up the poles yet, but spent two hours down a hole in East London's Commercial Road "helping" engineers to make repairs and netting cabling 50 years old.

Book to order

THE Royal Canadian Mounted Police are first on the list for a new book to be launched next week on *How Not to be a Money Launderer*. Nigel Morris-Cotterill, the author, received the Mounties' request days after an advert for his new book went live on the Internet. A £20 cheque has already arrived from the Canadian Mounted Police College in Ottawa, and the author has planned the counterfoil to his wall.



"It's good to talk money"

Rat pickings

ENOUGH of Fat Cats. Let's turn to British Rats, whose year, Chinese-style, begins on February 19. Traditionally, Rat years are ones of opportunity for those prepared to take risk. Lori Rei, a hand analyst of Liskeard, Cornwall, says "the Rat is a master at finding rich pickings". Those should be sweet words for some British businessmen.

Sir Christopher Hogg, the man who demerged Courtaulds Textiles from Courtaulds, and whose reputation for making businesses work harder becomes chairman of Allied Domecq next month. The outgoing chairman has just issued a profits warning.

Gerry Robinson, with Forte tucked under his cheese trap, should be aware Rat years are "an excellent 12-month period for new beginnings and fresh starts".

John Kemp-Welch, chairman of the Stock Exchange, should be pleased to know Rat predicts a year when markets and economies are buoyant, and things are generally on the up. And Sir John Harvey-Jones can preach his gospel to new businesses that it's a year to "begin projects, launch new products and forge new links".

COLIN CAMPBELL

Hollick deal heralds era of new media conglomerates

Eric Reguly
and Ross
Tieman look
at the start
of a trend

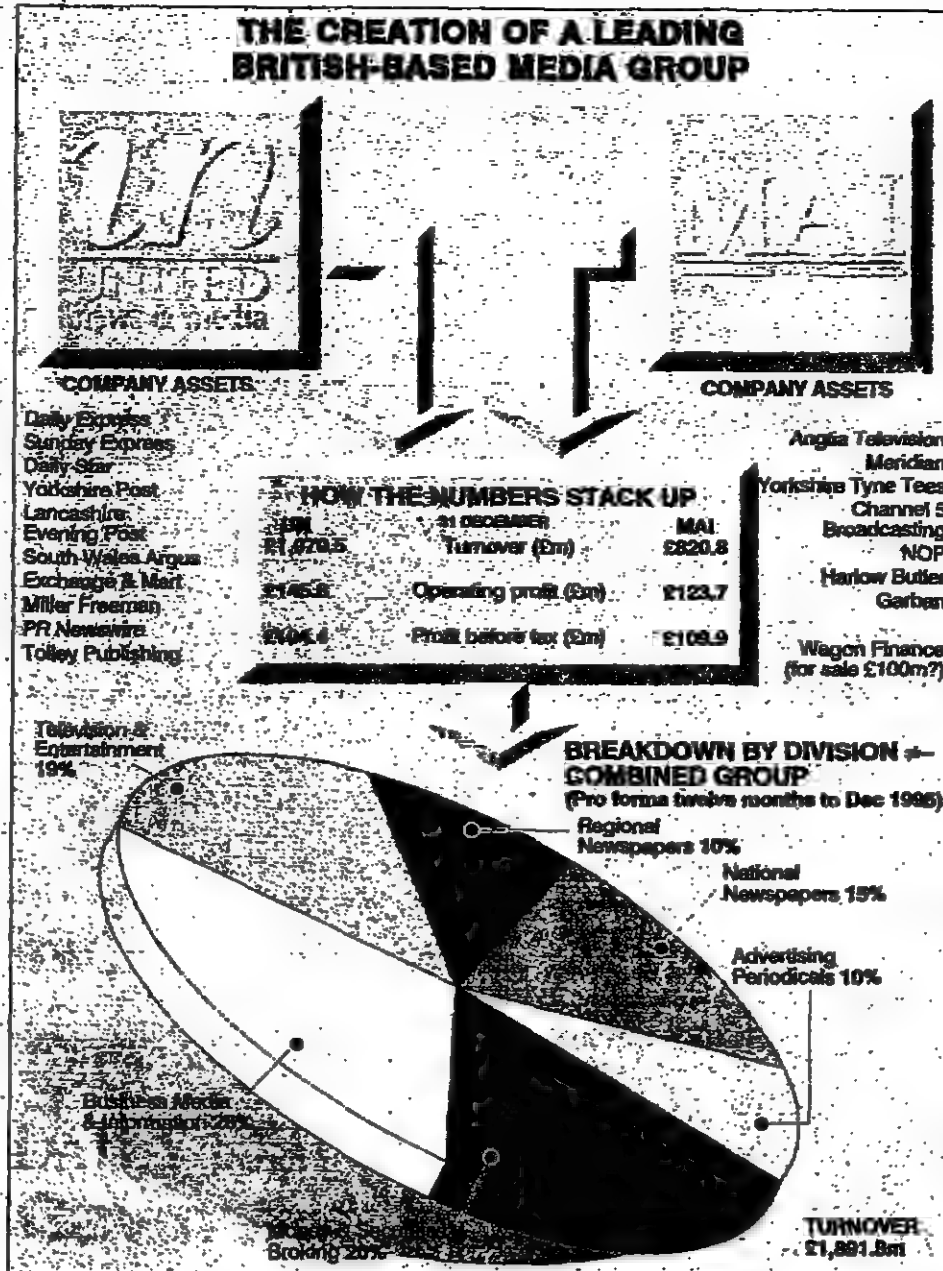
THE merger of United News & Media, a vintage, slow-moving newspaper company, and MAI, an aggressive television and financial services group, is expected to be the first of many such deals in Britain. This particular transaction was triggered by the Broadcasting Bill, now making its way through Parliament, which will remove many of the toughest restrictions on cross-media ownership. The age of the media conglomerate is here.

If anything, Britain is a latecomer to the trend. In America, sweeping changes in communications legislation have unleashed a cross-ownership free-for-all that has only just begun. The ultimate goal is to obtain access to residential and business consumers, be it through TV and radio signals, phone lines, the Internet, on-line services or newspapers and magazines. Any group that controls only one or two of these methods of access is reckoned to have a limited future; the winners will be the players that control many or all of them.

Lord Hollick, the managing director of MAI, who is to be chief executive of the as-yet-unnamed merged group, cites The News Corporation, the parent company of The Times, as a pioneer. News Corp — which owns dozens of newspapers around the world, America's Fox TV network and a 40 per cent stake in satellite TV company BSkyB — last year joined forces with MCI, America's second-largest long-distance phone company. MCI, which in turn is owned 20 per cent by British Telecom, bought a £3.5 per cent stake in News Corp for \$2.4 billion. The partners, among other things, plan to launch a satellite TV service in the US.

The recent passage in the US of the Telecommunications Bill will accelerate this process. The Bill allows local, long-distance and cable companies to attack each other's markets and will probably trigger a flurry of takeovers and partnerships. Nynex and Bell Atlantic, two US regional phone companies, are negotiating a joint venture in the long-distance telephone market. They, in turn, are expected to seek partnerships with multimedia companies so that they can provide services such as video-on-demand.

British media companies, in the expectation of more liberal cross-media ownership rules, have been thinking along the same lines. The Mirror Group launched Live TV, a cable channel, and bought a 20 per cent stake in Scottish Television. David Montgomery,



Mirror chief executive, sees television as the group's future. He has been lobbying the Government for an exemption that would allow the group to increase its TV interests. At the moment, it has little room to manoeuvre because it controls more than 20 per cent of the national newspaper market, a level that brings it to the ceiling on cross-media ownership under existing rules.

Pearson, the owner of the Financial Times and Penguin books, has also been driving hard in the TV sector. It has just added Select TV, producer of *Lovejoy* and *Birds of a*

Feather, to its burgeoning broadcasting portfolio, which includes Thames TV and Australia's Grundy Worldwide.

The Telegraph group, publisher of *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph*, is one of the few large newspaper companies without a sizeable electronic media investment.

However, many newspaper groups are diversifying. About half of the largest newspaper companies in North America and Europe have broadcast arms, and those are companies that investment that analysts favour.

To some degree, MAI's merger with United is a bail-

out of United's ailing newspapers. The circulations of the *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express* have been in freefall, although its regional titles have been more robust. Aside from pumping a fortune into the editorial departments of the papers, there seemed to be no way of stopping their decline. Efforts to stem the slide, by hiring new editors and launching an open chequebook search for new journalistic talent, are already under way.

But the rumour, denied by Lord Stevens, United's chairman, was that the national titles were on the auction block. Andrew Neil, former editor of *The Sunday Times*, was part of one group trying to buy the papers, and Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, the composer, was said to be a member of another. Carlton Communications, the largest ITV company, was also thought to be interested and may end up spoiling the MAI-United merger by bidding for United.

The merger of United and MAI through a tax-free share swap will create what the two companies describe as "a leading British-based media group". Regional and national newspapers will account for only 25 per cent of combined turnover and 18 per cent of combined operating profits, based on financial figures for

the year to December 31. Advertising periodicals will account for 10 per cent of turnover, and television and entertainment 19 per cent. MAI owns Anglia Television and Meridian Broadcasting, the ITV licensees, and makes programmes such as those based on P. D. James's Adam Dalgleish novels.

Money and securities broking will account for 20 per cent, and business media and information 26 per cent. Lord Hollick said that the group's heavy exposure to business media and information makes comparisons with Reuters, the electronic information and news group, perfectly valid.

So what are the benefits of putting two companies together? On the practical front, cost savings are an obvious advantage. MAI will close its head office and move into the black and grey Express building on the banks of the River Thames. Some departments will combine and some redundancies are inevitable. Lord Hollick said cost savings equivalent to about 10 per cent of the combined operating profits of £265 million are possible.

The merger, in theory, will release financial resources to prop up the ailing Express titles. It will also insulate the companies from hostile raiders. Both United and MAI were considered highly vulnerable to takeover attempts.

But Lord Hollick sees the potential for cross-fertilisation, cross-promotion and the development of new businesses as the greatest advantage. With TV, newspapers and advertising periodicals, United and MAI will have access to huge swathes of the population, while businesses such as PR Newswire, NOP, the pollster, and the exhibitions division will give it good coverage of the business market.

Lord Hollick said: "In our view, we have three or four businesses that are pre-eminent in their markets. What they need is additional resources, and this deal gives them that." Not everyone is convinced that synergies exist. Dan Colson, chief executive of The Telegraph, said he sees no crossover, for instance, between newspaper publishing and MAI's money and securities broking businesses. "It's very easy to be seduced by the theory that you have to be in all forms of the media in the first place, and money-broking isn't even media."

Nonetheless, the trend is likely to continue. There are few practical and legal reasons newspapers and electronic media should be separate businesses anymore. Not all the mergers will succeed. United and MAI, however, have to be given credit for their pioneering spirit.

When large investors find a voice

The institution's role as shareholder is changing, Marianne Curphey finds

Institutional investors, who for so long have been like inarticulate, slumbering giants, have suddenly found their voice and are making it heard.

The most publicly transformed of all is Standard Life, one of the largest investors, which yesterday announced its objections to Farnell Electronics's proposed acquisition of the US industrial company, Premier.

The price, it said, was too high; it would dilute earnings to Farnell's shareholders and would saddle Farnell with more than £430 million net debt.

Standard Life's outburst came just days after it had questioned the wisdom of Carlton Communications's proposed bonus increases for its most senior directors.

Guy Jubb, the insurer's corporate governance director, said companies should reward management for "outstanding achievement, not mediocrity", with the implication that Carlton's executives had not delivered the required results.

Yesterday he defended his comments by saying: "Standard Life felt it was 'right' to take a lead on the issue and a company's performance ought to be 'continually assessed'."

Until recently, institutional investors in the UK, unlike those in America, had seemed rather passive, either trying to put pressure on companies behind the scenes, or ultimately selling shares if they were unhappy with performance.

As institutional investors have increased in size, this becomes more difficult. In addition, the rise of indexed funds means trustees often can no longer use the option of selling shares, as they have to keep the appropriate weighting for the size of the company.

UK pension funds controlled assets worth £30 billion in 1975; today they amount to more than £500 billion. One fund manager said yesterday: "With a 3 per cent stake in a company it is impossible to sell quickly without driving the share price down. As investors get bigger, their influence over and responsibility to the stock market becomes greater."

Norwich Union, another chairman and chief executive, but he is convinced changes are overdue. One of the US's largest and most confrontational pension funds, the California Public Employees Retirement System, is already diversifying into the UK.

"Vociferous institutional investors are well established in the US and it was almost inevitable that our cousins across the Atlantic should influence us," he says. "Larger shareholders tend to speak out when negotiations behind the scenes have broken down. They have discovered a very powerful tool: by speaking out about one company, they are signalling to others in which they hold a stake that they too should step into line."

The biggest UK investor, the Prudential, still prefers discreet negotiations, though it does have a secret list of companies about which it is concerned. Fidelity and Legal & General, likewise, have so far stayed silent.

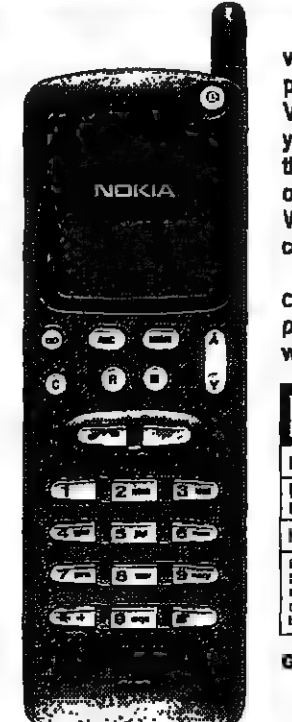
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Accountants can fight back and work to restore image

From Mr David W. K. Chitty Sir, I wholeheartedly agreed with Robert Bruce's report on the consequences of Mr John Cook's victory over the leadership of the English ICA (January 25). The English ICA has become increasingly burdened by a bloated central bureaucracy which is remote from the membership and which fails to address the issues confronting either the profession or British business. Few members actively participate in institute affairs and the institute has become publicly ridiculed by its expensive and pointless poster campaign tell-

ing the general public that they will "sleep better with a chartered accountant". Mr Cook's actions demonstrate that the membership can fight back. The next challenge is for members to change the constitution to require the president to be elected by a vote of all the members rather than by council members behind closed doors. The proposed merger with CIMA should be rejected as it offers nothing to the members of either institute except for an even larger central bureaucracy. The Law Society has dem-

onstrated under the leadership of Martin Meurs that a great professional body can be run democratically for the interest of its members. This should be an example to the members of the English ICA who now have a chance themselves to assert their voices, achieve democracy, and collectively work together to restore the tarnished image of their profession. Yours faithfully, DAVID W. K. CHITTY (Technical Manager), Chantry Vellacott, Russell Square House, 10-12 Russell Square, WCL

Charge accumulating interest to tackle the problem of bill payments

From Trevor Graham Baylis Sir, I was interested in Michael Heseltine's comments on *Breakfast with Frost* concerning staying in business. He was proud to say "at least all my creditors were paid".

I am a tradesman and sole proprietor of a company and have traded for 27 years. In all that time without the support

from my bankers — Barclays — I would have gone out of business years ago and certainly would never have been able to afford to develop my invention of the Baygen Freepay Radio.

Some companies take up to 38 months to pay their bills. Others fold, leaving debts never paid. If the nation wants

to encourage new business, the newcomer must not carry the interest burden created by others. I believe the solution to this problem already exists. Banks, VAT offices and tax collectors charge accumulating interest on debts. Companies should, by law, be able to enforce their practice. The tradesman would add on a percentage of this levy to the Exchange rate payment for the enforcement of this rule.

Companies would not be allowed to dictate terms that might leave low-level creditors exposed or disqualify business opportunity on the basis of payment terms.

Yours faithfully, TREVOR BAYLIS, Haven Studio, Eel Pie Island, Twickenham, Middlesex.

Extra zeros at KPMG taken into account

From Mr James Porter Sir, Much is being written about the size of partners' salaries in the recently published accounts of KPMG. Surely the figures are reasonable as reward for the risks taken.

The partners of an accountancy firm are wholly liable for damages they may incur

during litigation, even after retirement from the firm. Remuneration should always reflect on responsibility, and, in the case of KPMG, the extra zeros are well earned. Yours faithfully,

JAMES PORTER, 31 Criffel Avenue, Clapham SW2.

Vital workforce changes ignored

From Mr John E. Moore

Sir, I find the current discussions of earnings growth to be hollow (Philip Bassett, January 30). The views concentrate on the pay settlements and earnings growth of those who remain in their posts. Does Adair Turner really believe that everyone is on a CBI-monitored rising wage curve?

The commentators, government and private, seem to overlook completely the enormous change in the structure of the earning workforce in recent years, as huge numbers of older workers have been made redundant and, if they are lucky, rejoin the earnings ladder at a lower point. The effect of this in lowering average earnings seems to be ignored by the statisticians.

No wonder productivity per head has increased, but productivity per £ of earnings has surely increased much more, which is what really matters in international competitiveness.

Yours faithfully, JOHN E. MOORE, 24 Wildcroft Drive, North Holmwood, Dorking, Surrey.

Letters to The Times
Business and
Finance section
can be sent by
fax on 0171-782 5112.

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

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TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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THEATRE

A melancholy study of the game of life? Storey's *The Changing Room* is revived in London



VISUAL ART

From the Tate's Cézanne show: the magnificent *Still Life with Apples* is today's choice

THE TIMES ARTS



MUSIC

Flashes of insight, but also some indulgences, in Roger Norrington's exploration of Hector Berlioz



TOMORROW

Homage to an eminent Victorian: the centenary of Lord Leighton is celebrated with a fine exhibition

THEATRE: Rugby league drama in a David Storey classic; and an even-tempered portrait of comic Tommy Cooper

Life's a pitch, and then you die

Little up his sleeve

There is something odd, ironic and, for those of us who admire the man, highly satisfying in finding David Storey's rugby-football drama ensconced in the West End as part of a season of Royal Court "classics". Throughout the 1980s the playhouse that had made his name as a dramatist treated him as a non-person, forcing him to give other theatres the work he had written with its proscenium arch in mind and, I suspect, stemming his creative flow as a result. But a new regime is at last making what, next to the production of a new Storey play, is the best kind of reparation.

If I had to pick a personal favourite from the work he wrote in the late 1960s and the 1970s, it would be his *Contractor*. Maybe next year the Court will find the courage to stage a play that requires a text to be meticulously erected in Act I and conscientiously dismantled in Act II. But the piece

The Changing Room Duke of York's

at the Duke of York's is an excellent example of Storey's ability to evoke lives from snippets and a society from those lives. Less becomes more. He calls the play *The Changing Room* and leaves you feeling that you are seeing a changing world.

The main event, a rugby league match somewhere in Yorkshire, occurs offstage. Nothing of obvious import happens amid the dingy brown benches, the grey-green plaster, the clothes hooks and (at the back) the dreary white tiles of a locker room that would have any modern rugby-league pro on the fax to his agent with demands for hardship pay.

The players prepare for the game, they stagger in frozen and filthy at half-time and then dress and make their farewells, leaving the decrepit cleaner we met at the beginning to end the play with another despondent shove of the trash. Add to this a pep-talk from the coach, a couple of visits to the changing room by the club chairman, a casual frisking of the players by the ref, the substitution of a half-conscious forward, and that's about it. The play might almost be one of those documentaries for television that end with a studio discussion about the future of the sport between men called Brian and Ron.

Certainly, James Macdonald directs it with admirable attention to



Knock-on effects: Philip Martin Brown (Sandford), Brendan Coyle (Kendal), and Philip Whitchurch (Walsh) in David Storey's behind-the-scrum dramatisation

detail. And, although one or two of the bodies onstage might have trouble surviving a sprint for a taxi down St Martin's Lane, his 22-man cast create a credibly sweaty, authentically male atmosphere.

Character after character edges into being amid the mildly salacious banter and the smell of resin: Philip Whitchurch as the laughing boy whose idea of fun is urinating

in the team bath; Brendan Coyle as the player who, even when half-conscious, clings pathetically to the toilet with which he plans to build shelves for the unfaithful wife who is ruining his game; Simon Wolfe as the wary mother's boy who examines each word for the possibility of offence; and, most significantly, David Hargreaves as the club's top dog and Ewan

Hooper as its bottom one. The chairman is a rich builder who never appears without his accountant, gives the appearance of having to fake an enthusiasm for the game, and moans about the deteriorating quality of everything from bricks to chickens to men.

The cleaner's nostalgia for old days when colliers played rugby after 16 hours underground isn't to

be taken so seriously, for he is a miserable old git who never watches a game. Nevertheless, he too adds to the play's often melancholy feel. As in much of Storey's work, a sense of unease and loss is all about.

But so, if only briefly, is something rare in Storey. You feel it when the time to face the crowd approaches and even the jokers go

quiet. You certainly feel it when the players return, justifiably proud at a hard task well performed. Divisions have been replaced by unity. There is camaraderie, even joy. For just a few moments a game and a changing room have shown what the world might be.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

This is the story of Tommy Cooper. Thankfully, playwright Garry Lyons' portrait of the fondly remembered fezzed, juggling, juggling, juggling comic (embodied by long-jawed, lumbering Steven Speirs) is a bit different from today's countless biographically scrappy tributes to rock'n'rollers.

True, we see Cooper rising to fame, and his final collapse. Scenes alternate between his behaviour offstage and his best-loved acts. And Speirs recreates Cooper's old tricks, combining manicness and mock clumsiness.

The surprise is that Lyons' play, first written for Hull Truck, specifically focuses on Cooper's pre-celebrity days when he was entertaining the troops in the Middle East just before demob. In Peter Rowe's energetic, stylish Everyman production, we watch Cooper in a memory-scape: an expanse

Frankie and Tommy Everyman, Liverpool

of sand encircled by old props baskets with a curtain stage at the rear, its proscenium arch fashioned from corrugated iron (designer Ashley Sharpe).

Actually this is a story of two men, of the short-lived double act of Tommy Cooper and little Frankie Lyons. The latter went back to working sheetmetal after his battle with Cooper's growing ego. The surnames are no coincidence — the dramatist is Frankie's son.

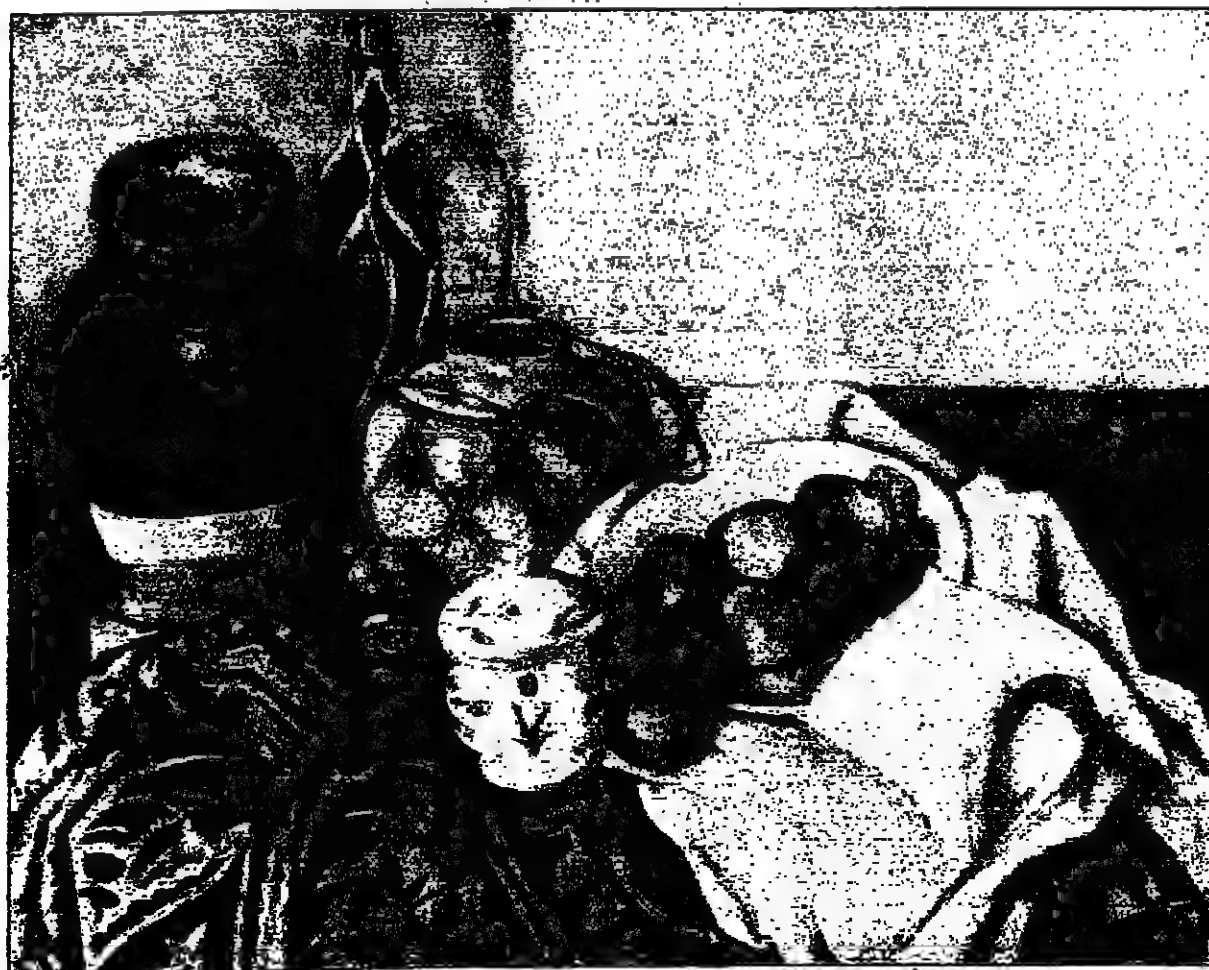
As a consequence, Cooper is not simply fondly remembered. Combining research and poetic licence, Lyons Jr is really exploring the competitive aspect of double acts, the unfunny side of an obsessively ambitious comic, and the difference between large and small talent.

Speirs is not Cooper reincarnated. He has not got the vocal rasp, and the young Cooper was in fact more skeletal than hefty. Still, he builds up a quite complex character, sometimes hyperactive like an insecure child, sometimes bullishly crushing, maybe just driven, but perhaps a sharp caricature.

This is not a play of dazzling genius or depth. Ben Fox's basically affable, unbrilliant Frankie is not the Sallier of light entertainment. The escalating rows could also be condensed. Nevertheless, the duo's interactions, with Cooper warding off intimacy by playing the joker, are very believably scripted.

KATE BASSETT

Richard Cork continues his guide to the Tate's Cézanne retrospective



"Even the humblest objects were painted sumptuously": Cézanne's *Still Life with Apples*, 1893-94. Private collection

In Cézanne's day, still life was regarded as a rather inferior subject. But with typical defiance he insisted on painting even the humblest objects in a grand and sumptuous manner.

Still Life with Apples, painted when he was in his mid-fifties, is among the most delectable of these paintings. He liked injecting tension by making the objects tilt in unexpected directions. But that does not wholly

explain why the oval mouth of the green ceramic vase has been widened so surprisingly. When it suited him, Cézanne played around with perspective. Different components in *Still Life with Apples* seem to be viewed from different vantages. He wanted us to gaze into the welcoming emptiness of the vase. But the

neighbouring glazed ginger jar is seen from lower down, so that Cézanne could emphasise its gratifying roundness.

The plate, by contrast, is raised up steeply on the white cloth, helping us to see the ripe, burnished Provencal apples as enticingly as possible. They spill out on to the patterned drape and seem to

be in danger of pushing the sugar bowl off the table. But Cézanne counters this unrest, and the almost volcanic upheaval of the cloth's mountainous forms, with the coolness of the wall behind.

● Cézanne is at the Tate Gallery until April 28, sponsored by Ernst & Young. For advance booking, which is advised, telephone 0171-420 0000

● Tomorrow: Richard Cork discusses *Woman with a Coffeepot*, c. 1895

CONCERTS: Berlioz masterpieces; lively Beethoven; a period quartet

ROGER NORRINGTON and the London Philharmonic continued their exploration of Berlioz at the Festival Hall with a programme of shorter works, some heard only rarely today. Norrington, in his introductory chat, described them all as "small masterpieces", which indeed they are, in their way. We were certainly given an overview of Berlioz's development as a composer, from his earliest orchestral piece, the overture *Les Francs-Juges*, to the Royal Hunt and Storm scene from Act IV of *Les Troyens*. This set up many fascinating cross-references and insights, though perhaps at the expense of the performers' collective concentration.

While there were many

attention to the textual details: a crisply dotted cadence on trumpets here, a pregnant drum roll there. And all contained within a taut rhythmic framework providing a strong forward thrust (the Philharmonia on top form).

All the more curious, therefore, that the solo part, which would normally be expected to be the more ostentatious, should prove the more reticent. But this was the reticence of utter self-confidence and mastery. Gil Shaham's playing may seem to be innocently straightforward. But how telling the slightest nuance becomes in that context.

The emphatic underlining of textual details, however, is considerably less of a virtue in Sibelius' *Wolff's* neon signposting in the Fifth Symphony continually foregrounded material better left in shadow. The contours were big and dramatic, often arresting, but lacked the veiled, atmospheric quality that Sibelius surely wanted. However, if the spirit remained unconvincing, the rhetoric was undeniably stirring.

In Beethoven's Violin Concerto those gestures drew our

Homage paid in bits and pieces

LPO/Norrington
Festival Hall

flashes of genius from Norrington, there were other times when he seemed so immersed in the unusual beauty of Berlioz's music that he appeared strangely indifferent to the audience. Parts of the excerpt from *Les Troyens* suffered from this patchiness: the storm climax, with the antiphonal outburst of "off-stage" brass and timpani, was thrilling, but the extended passage for horns, while beau-

tifully played, was too indulged. This was generally a degree of self-absorption. This was also true of the two overtures, the *Roman Carnival* and *Les Francs-Juges*. This last seems with ideas, not only in the thematic material but also in the composer's use of the orchestral palette. Berlioz clearly could not resist experimenting with every section of

the orchestra, giving solos to ophicleides and trombones, emphatic pizzicatos in the double basses and so on. No ophicleides in the London Philharmonic, of course, and the fat sound of modern tubas and trombones lent a ponderous air.

The least familiar item on the programme was the *Fantasy* on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, with the role of Spirits of the Air taken by the London Philharmonic Choir and a magical scoring that brilliantly created an atmosphere of enchantment. Much better known today is the song-cycle *Les Nuits d'été*, which was immaculately sung by Ann Murray.

TESS KNIGHTON

Haydn (Quartet in B Minor, Op 33 No 1), Beethoven (in F, Op 135) or Mendelssohn (A Minor, Op 13), inevitably sets them apart from conventional ensembles. The timbre is wholly integral to their music-making. An almost perverse delight is taken in presenting ordinary phrases in an unusual way. With the Andante of the Haydn sounding quaintly remote and the Presto all short bowstrokes and jokey chatter, it would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast between movements.

Beethoven's enigmatic last quartet is fertile ground for spirits such as these. If the tentative opening was shrouded in mystery, the throwaway ending was no less teasing. The Scherzo demonstrated a less positive characteristic: technical insecurity, with vulnerable intonation and notes hit less than squarely.

In the Mendelssohn, the Adagio non lento was rather a robust creation, the light touch of the Scherzo was not ideally realised, and a long pause destroyed the contrast with the explosive opening of the finale. But the ensemble contrived a breathtakingly tranquil ending to the work.

Quatuor Mosaïques consists of three Austrians and a Frenchman, playing period instruments. Christophe Coin, the Frenchman, is a distinguished cellist. Erich Höbarth, Andrea Bischof and Anita Mitterer, the Austrians, have been associated with Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Concentus Musicus Wien. The group's individual approach reminds one of those iconoclastic musicians.

The sound of their period instruments, whether in

Big on gesture

Philharmonia/
Wolff
Festival Hall

CHARLES ROSEN, in his new book *The Romantic Generation*, proffers the notion that "the choreographic gyrations of the virtuoso conductor are important to the audience's comprehension", on the grounds that "an accent accompanied by an outlying arm seems literally to become louder and more intense".

The podium choreography of Hugh Wolff, conducting the Philharmonia on Tuesday, provided a telling demonstration. The crouching and stalking were from the Tilson Thomas school of conducting. But there was also a repertoire of less histrionic gestures that did signal the conductor's intentions.

In Beethoven's Violin Concerto those gestures drew our

Teasing in fours

Quatuor Mosaïques
Wigmore Hall

BARRY MILLINGTON

POP 1

Chips off a famous old block: 3T are a trio of Jackson offspring — and don't mind who knows

POP 2

Simple truths, with an Irish accent, come on the latest tracks from the Saw Doctors

THE FILM POP ARTS

POP 3

"The voice of a girl, the body of a Gladiator": who can resist the special charm of Audioweb?

POP 4

Gravity-defying Cleo brings a touch of the old magic to a season at the Café Royal

With hopes high in Hounslow

NEW ALBUMS: The Bluetones take to the sky. Michael Jackson's nephews don't. Both will sell millions, says David Sinclair

THE BLUETONES

Expecting To Fly (Superior Quality Recordings/A&M BLUE 004) DESPITE the unseemly scramble by the latest wave of groups to dissociate themselves from the now rather dog-eared Britpop tag, the bandwagon rolls merrily onwards. And if the Bluetones are not an example of a new British band playing fine pop music, then it is hard to think who is.

Four earnest young men from Hounslow who have already been declared the great pale hopes of 1996 on the basis of a handful of singles, they offer plenty of passion, though nothing in the way of innovation. Sticking primarily to a retro formula of guitars, drums and voices, their debut album, *Expecting To Fly*, has a comfortably familiar sound which will do nothing to hinder its potentially massive commercial appeal.

On songs such as *Things Change* and *Time Is Again*, Adam Devlin's guitar-playing encompasses the chiming grace of Johnny Marr and the choppy aggression of Pete Townshend, while singer Mark Morris plies his tales of romantic whimsy with a clean-cut voice, making a pleasing virtue out of his drawn-out, southern-English vowel sounds.

Disillusionment is a recurring theme — "I'm not the same person I was a year ago/You cut me deeply and the scars still show" — but, typically, it is music that turns a downcast mood into something life-affirming and wholly uplifting.

The Bluetones' fondness for pop melody, and the care with which the songs are written and arranged, means that they stray, at times, a little too close to the bland "unsmuthtery" of the Beautiful South. But on harder numbers, such as the ambitious *Talking To Clarry* and *Cut Some Rug* (imagine the Stone Roses with a proper singer), there is a rare brilliance at work.

3T

Brotherhood (MJJ Music/Epic 481694) BROTHERS Taj (22), Taryll (20) and TJ Jackson (17) are the three Ts in 3T. Their Dad is Tito Jackson, formerly of the Jackson Five/Jacksons, which means that their uncle is none other than the King of Pop himself. Membership of a showbusiness dynasty undoubtedly has its advantages. Not only are the boys — none of whom looks a day over 15 — signed to Michael Jackson's MJJ label, but he has also contributed a new song, *Why*, to their album, *Brotherhood*.

However, the intensity of the grooming process, which effectively began at birth, and the burden of expectation which now rests on their slender shoulders is such that any spark of youthful innocence or spontaneity has been rigorously excised from this debut.

The result is a sophisticated but stodgy collection of mature soul ballads and mellow swingbeat grooves that have been polished to dull perfection. Uncle Michael sings with the boys on *Why*, an insipid, orchestrated ballad that addresses such big questions as "Why does Wednesday come after Tuesday?" and his involvement alone will guarantee that this album will be a substantial hit.

However, their instinctive tendency to play safe means that despite their obvious talent, the Ts sound as if they have been catapulted into an early middle-age.

THE SAW DOCTORS

Same Out Town (Shamtown Records/Pinnacle SAWDOC 004) IMMUNE to the winds of change that constantly rake the pop landscape, the Saw Doctors continue to peddle their emerald brand of folk rock with stoic goodwill on their third album, *Same Out Town*. Songs ranging from the jolly *Macnas Parade* to the lilting *Clare Island* are peppered with the usual Irish landmarks, while the romantic refrain of "Why don't we share the darkness tonight" is greeted (if only in the sleeve notes) with the riposte: "Guinness or Murphy?"

Musically it is a rugged, if rather guileless formula — "like Bono in wellingtons", as guitarist and singer Leo Moran memorably said — but there is a simple truth at the heart of songs such as *To Win Just Once* and the recent hit, *World Of Good*, that makes them strangely impervious to criticism.

As they put it themselves, "Life's too short for wasting/For ifs and might-have-beens." *Same Out Town* is an album that demands to be savoured on its own terms, unhindered by the ifs and buts of fashion, timing or taste.

STATUS QUO

Don't Stop (Polygram TV 531 035) IF EVER there was an argument for forcing the compulsory retirement of rock bands this is it. To celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of a partnership that was forged, appropriately, at a Butlin's holiday camp, Francis Rossi and Rick Parfitt have hit on the idea of putting a selection of other people's songs, some of them perfectly good to begin with, through the Status Quo grinder.

Performed with a cavalier disregard for nuance and a deadening lack of conviction, the ominously titled *Don't Stop* is a farago of epigrams. *Proud Mary*, *Get Back*, *Lucille*, *Sorrow*, *Raining in My Heart* and of course Fleetwood Mac's presidential campaign song



Little fluffy clouds: the Bluetones, great white hopes of 1996, head for the heights on their debut album

Don't Stop are just some of the old chestnuts that get a roasting.

Torpedoed by lacklustre vocals and the Quo's notoriously arthritic rhythm section, even the Move's rabble-rousing *I Can Hear the Grass Grow* and Robert Palmer's haunting *Johnny and Mary* wilt like delicate blooms in the sun, while a collaboration with the Beach Boys on a version of their surfing classic *Fun Fun Fun* is nothing short of tragic. *Don't stop!* If only they would.

TOP TEN ALBUMS

- 1 (What's the Story) Morning Glory? Oasis (Creation)
- 2 Jagged Little Pill Alanis Morissette (Maverick)
- 3 The Bands Radiohead (Parlophone)
- 4 Different Class Pulp (Island)
- 5 Bizarre Fruit/Bizarre Fruit II M People (Deconstruction)
- 6 All Change Cast (Polydor)
- 7 Deliverance Baby D (Systematic)
- 8 B.P.M. — the Very Best of The Beat (Go Feet)
- 9 HiStory Michael Jackson (Epic)
- 10 Robson & Jerome Robson & Jerome (RCA)

© CN

Back to the great daze of variety

Caitlin Moran arm-wrestles with the hefty promise of Audioweb's eclectic sonic attack

Feel that "An arm like a tree-trunk is extended across the table. Under the skin, muscles wriggle about like restless children under a dovet. Its certainly some arm. Most of us make do with a percentage of this arm. Parts of it appear to be in different time-zones."

"And I don't do nothing," Martin, Audioweb's divinely gifted singer, giggles. "I don't pick up nothing heavier than a pint. It's God's joke: he gave me the voice of a girl and the body of a Gladiator."

Unfortunately, Martin cannot extend himself to describing Audioweb's music so succinctly. This is not surprising as Audioweb, like Heinz, come in 57 different varieties. Imagine Jah Wobble on bass, the Edge on guitar and this Jekyll and Hyde figure up front, alternating between the blissful purity of McAlmont at his most lovelorn and Shabba Rankins chatting away nineteen to the dozen.

Audioweb are a miracle shock when you see them live for the first time. There's a real feeling that you're witness-

ing an event that you can bore your children to death with in years to come. But the furrow Audioweb plough is a fraught one.

"It is shocking how difficult it is getting press with a black guy in the band," Martin growls. "We were supposed to be getting a feature in one of the music magazines, but they pulled it because they were doing Black Grape the same week, and they said that the readers would get confused if they had two bands with black members in the same issue."

Martin's record collection reflects what seems like every trend over the past 20 years. "I started off on reggae, went into ska 'cos I liked the way it was stripped down, angular. Then I had me soul phase — not too much, y'know? A bit of a dabble." He giggles again. "And then I had me indie. A large part of my house is devoted to the Smiths. Sixties stuff — Beatles, Stones, Hollies, Jefferson Airplane, and Paul Jones. He's a bit of a hero. "But I can't stand much of



Audioweb, with Martin on the right — "the voice of a girl, the body of a Gladiator"

what's happening now — it all sounds the same. I turn on the radio and I don't know if it's the Stone Roses or the Bluetones." I think that's what Alan Bluetone was striving for.

"All the Britpop stuff is rubbish," Martin bellows. "I know all their references, and they're not doing much with them. The only single in the past year and a half that made me sit up was *Reverend Black Grape*. Then I bought the album, and that was boring."

"They really wimped out. That album should have been

a rhythmic punch in the face. It was just this thing you could tap your foot to. If you were really drunk." Having dismissed most of his peers, Martin turns to those he supports.

"Supergrass are brilliant," he says. "We did Jools Holland's New Year's Eve show with them, and they were lovely. I saw Danny walking down the street a couple of weeks ago, holding this pair of trousers. He'd just come out of Top Shop and was going into Marks & Spencer. I asked him what he was doing, and he said, 'I've just

found these trousers in the street, and I'm taking them back to all the shops to see if I can get a refund. Pretend they were a present!'"

Martin lets out a huge guffaw. "I started to get worried — if *Supergrass* need to go around selling trousers after having a No.1 album, it's going to take us years before we can afford to get a round in."

With which he lifts his pint and pumps those spectacular muscles a little bit more.

● Audioweb's single, *Yeah*, is released on Monday by Mother Records

CONCERTS

Perfect dentistry with added bite

**Nick Heyward
Dingwalls, NW1**

THESE days, it is widely held that the owner of the most boyish grin in British pop is Blur's Damon Albarn. Back in the early 1980s, though, that mantle was cast around a young Nick Heyward's shoulders. While many musical contemporaries were experimenting with the frilled collars and extravagant fringes of New Romanticism, the relative wit and drive of his punk-pop band Haircut 100 came as a breath of fresh air.

The penny might be beginning to drop though. *Tangled*, his recent album for Epic, has won warm reviews, going some way to repositioning the 34-year-old artist within the collective consciousness.

Driven by a much more muscular guitar sound than that which characterised his earlier work, his short, sharp songs have led some critics to comment that Heyward should be viewed almost as an older brother to the brash young heroes of Britpop. His acute lyrical eye provides the strongest support for such a

theory: maturity has further ripened his ability to evoke intensely English scenes through the clever use of a telling word or phrase, so that now social comment occurs where whimsicality previously reigned.

This one-off London appearance, coming towards the end of a 14-date tour, found Heyward deploying his grin far more sparingly than before and instead thrashing out those new songs (*She's Another Girl*, *London*, *Carry On Loving*, the recent modest hit *The World*) with relative aggression. Visits to his back catalogue were few and far between: 1983's *Blue Hat for a Blue Day* was scarcely recognisable in its new, swaggering incarnation, though the Haircuts' *Fantastic Day* from a year earlier still managed to project its original charm.

An obvious determination to carve out a new musical direction is to be applauded, however. If Albarn is still writing with Heyward's current energy in 15 years' time, he really will have something to smile about.

ALAN JACKSON

Vocal acrobat

**Cleo Laine
Café Royal**

AFTER Barbara Cook's *tour de force* last month, there was a danger that the rest of this winter's programme at the Café Royal would seem a terrible anticlimax. Cleo Laine's opening night laid those fears to rest. Though her singing does not exactly sweep you away in a storming torrent of emotion, she has lost none of her appetite for those gravity-defying, high-wire duets with John Dankworth.

On her album *Solitude*, released last year, Laine was matched with the Ellington Orchestra, now under the direction of Duke's son, Mercer. With Dankworth supplying most of the arrangements, the meeting went extremely well, particularly in the unearthing of a number of neglected tunes, including *Reflections* and the playful adaptation of *Sonnet* to *Hank Cinq*, a theme lifted from the Shakespearean collection *Such Sweet Thunder*.

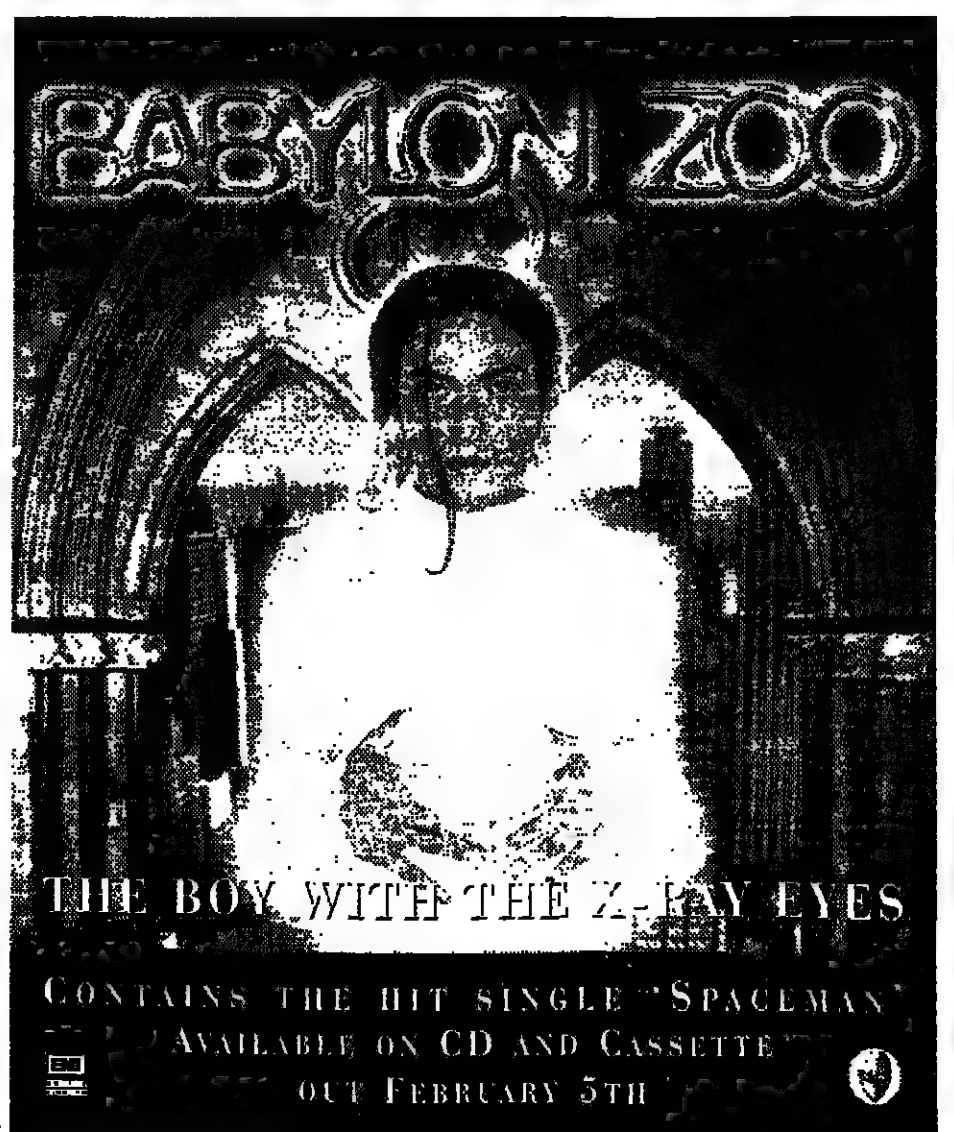
It would take a miracle to squeeze a big band into the corner of the Green Room, and in any case the stripped-down setting of the Dankworth quartet suits Laine even better. Weaving her vocals between her husband's saxophones and clarinet and the filigree piano of John Horler, she has ample space to function as the group's third soloist.

Reaching back to the prehis-

toric era of W.C. Handy, Dankworth put a contemporary, funky spin on *St Louis Blues*. The wayfaring lyrics of *I Thought About You* were complemented by Malcolm Creech's insistent bass lines and Mike Bradley's train-like drum motifs. Given her range, Laine is the perfect choice to perform *Croole Love Call*, her tribute to Adelaide Hall, embellished in this reading by exceptional if rarely heard lyrics concocted by Lorraine Feather.

The evening sagged only in the extended medley dedicated to Vincent Youmans. There was nothing wrong with the songs themselves, but the fragmented, stop-go treatment served to underline Laine's occasional habit of treating lyrics as mere playthings. Then, again her sly sense of mischief allowed her to extract the last ounce of satire from the glorious *Peel Me a Grape*, written by Dave Frishberg and popularised by Blossom Dearie. Frishberg's deft evocation of ennui among the uptown socialites sounds even more timely in this age of the princess, the gym and the shopping expedition.

CLIVE DAVIS



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EDUCATION

Will the heads play Labour's tune?

Tony Evans looks
at the strategic
options for
independent
schools

Whether the general election occurs this year or next, it is already clear that each political party sees education as a central issue in its manifesto. Indeed, it seems likely to play a more important role than in any election for more than 30 years and it is no surprise that parties now propose initiatives, such as "fast-tracking", with greater frequency than coherence.

Independent schools are intensely sensitive to this rash of conflicting proposals but it can no longer be assumed that such schools represent, as they did in the past, a safe Tory constituency. The past ten years have been characterised by a series of pragmatic accretions in educational policy, rather than by structural consistency, and those committed to the values of independent schools may well consider all politicians' rhetoric with unprecedented scepticism in the months ahead.

In this they will not be alone, for they share many of the concerns of governors, parents and staff in the maintained sector. Yet independent schools have specific preoccupations against which they will judge the plethora of political intentions.

What might these preoccupations be and how might independent schools react? It may seem a truism that independent schools value above all their independence, as do the parents of their pupils. At all costs that principle will be defended in at least five domains.

First, there is resentment of increasingly intrusive bureaucracy. This has been appreciable and few heads would affirm that it has helped to improve standards. The



A music lesson at King Edward VI High School for Girls, Birmingham. Schools such as this will fight to retain their independence from political intrusion

independent school thrives only if its critical parent body approves of its ethos and provision. It is therefore vital that heads and governors have the freedom to develop their schools in ways which they believe help pupils to succeed. Intrusive bureaucracy erodes independence, as epitomised by the misguided format of the Department for Education's examination statistics, which distort and undervalue achievement, or the rigid requirements on registration, which give no credence to the local intelligence of responsible heads.

Secondly, independent schools will look hard at any threat of curricular erosion or dogmatism. Will a future Labour government require independent schools to observe the national curriculum in its every detail and at each stage? Will testing be imposed? Will it modify, in the wake of the imminent Dearing proposals, or Labour's plans, a national 14-19 provision in ways with which independent schools can be at ease? Over recent years independent schools have been vindicated in resisting inchoate or precipitous

curricular change: they mainly welcomed the principle of a national curriculum but gave warning against the complex folly with which it was implemented some five years ago.

The defence of separate sciences, of classics, of English literature, of mathematics and modern languages, opposition to modish cross-curricular themes and reservations about elaborate testing have underlined the salutary vision of independent schools. They will not compromise their academic values and freedom.

They would be unwise to barter such freedom against even assisted places, their third area of concern. The assisted places scheme, often accused of elitism, is in the social sense the exact opposite. Should a Labour government abolish the scheme or phase it out, as it is committed to do, most schools offering assisted places will remain comfortably viable. Some may choose to decrease in size but, ironically, social division will be increased, not reduced.

That will sadden independent schools, all of which seek to widen

opportunity and access. Even at this stage they hope a Labour government would seek to draw strength from independent schools and devise an alternative scheme in partnership which reconciles their independence with a range of admissions across the social spectrum on the basis of need.

The experience, academic and extracurricular diversity and proven quality of so many independent schools could be used imaginatively by a Labour government. This could profitably extend to boarding schools and is already reflected in

the steadily increasing number of places taken by local education authorities whose own schools cannot meet the full range of children's needs.

Fourthly, independent schools will defend resolutely their charitable status. Schools have interpreted their charitable purposes generously through bursaries, support to local communities, to the young, underprivileged and disabled through provision of sporting, musical and theatrical facilities, teacher training courses and, not least, their provision of educated, disciplined citizens.

Two thirds of independent schools report the use of facilities by community groups and nearly a quarter by maintained schools. Were charitable status removed, fees would rise but the effect, particularly in the urban day schools, would be to narrow the social base of the intake precisely where it should be enlarged. Education is a charitable activity *per se*. Why should a Labour government not extend charitable status to all schools?

A fifth area of concern lies with the independent inspection scheme. HMC and GSA have devised systems of inspection which are demanding and which seek to ensure that schools of the highest proven quality are further, and continuously, improved.

In this domain the Labour Party is wise to acknowledge the strengths of independent inspections accredited by Ofsted. Independent schools would not lightly surrender their stringent and appropriate system.

Independent schools are an integral part of education. They do not wish to be an enclave of privilege but to contribute to national prosperity. They seek co-operation not confrontation with government. In the five areas of concern outlined there is ample scope for respect, progress and positive partnership.

● The author is Headmaster of Portsmouth Grammar School and chairman of the Headmasters and Headmistresses Conference.

Susan Elkin finds that good primary schools exist outside Ofsted's roll of honour; Mary Ann Sieghart can't wait for the test results

Cecil Road, a highway to understanding

Cecil Road County Primary School is a huge former board school built in 1909 and tucked tightly into narrow, car-lined backstreets in Gravesend, Kent. It is oversubscribed and of its 400 children about 40 per cent, predominantly Sikhs, are bilingual.

Several things strike the visitor immediately. Plants in tubs bloom on the edges of the steps to the entrance. Posted on the door are several notices stressing partnership and parental involvement. Strains of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony are audible in the distance. Otherwise, it is very quiet. Beautiful examples of children's art hang everywhere.

You begin to sense something special even before you see a pupil. As pairs of tiny children, all neatly uniformed, come to the secretary on errands or with messages, your first impression is confirmed.

The present school was formed in 1989 from the merger of three separate schools. The former junior, infant and nursery had only 200 children on roll between them. Andy Sparks, the head, says: "My motto is that you have to get the best out of what you've got. I believe in thinking positively. Take our cricket team. We haven't even got a pitch. We practise in the playground and our boys have just won a championship for the fourth consecutive year."

"And I don't complain about

money," Mr Sparks adds. "I was an accountant before I came into education and I know how to get the best out of resources."

Classes are impressively orderly. Every child I met was purposefully getting on with something. Two were having a violin lesson. Another group was being taught music sitting on the floor around the teacher, the pupils concentrating intently.

A class of six-year-olds were all in their places working quietly. Even the nursery class was playing outside in an unusually disciplined and structured way. "I believe discipline is vital," Mr Sparks says. "Without it there is no learning environment." Kamal Cox works with bilingual children: to develop their English language skills. She also visits parents at home and provides an informal interpretation/translation service. "I have never heard anyone mention racial difference in this school except in a positive, celebratory way," Mrs Cox says.

It is for the management of its rich cultural diversity that the school is most remarkable. There are two ways of approaching racial integration. You can either make a complicated and self-defeating business of positive discrimination measures, or you can simply be natural and build real lasting equality — as Cecil Road does.



A lesson in tolerance: the children of Cecil Road

Doreen Deakin, the grandmother of a pupil, says: "In this school everyone is welcome and everyone is important. The school is part of the community and the community is part of the school. It has changed local attitudes to racial diversity."

Mrs Deakin believes the school "doesn't receive the accolades it deserves for what it does". Earlier this year the school was nominated for a national Citizenship Award for Celebrating Diversity. Out of 170 schools, Cecil Road was shortlisted to the last three, along with a Yorkshire grammar school and a Manchester high school. As joint runner-up Cecil Road knew that it was effectively the top primary school in the country.

Mr Sparks and one of his staff went last summer to

Manchester to receive the award. He believes it was a fitting end to his first five years at Cecil Road.

It is encouraging in these days when we are told so often of racial "incidents" and tensions to hear Mrs Deakin say: "The children celebrate Christmas, Easter, Diwali, Chinese new year and Jewish festivals. They are taught to understand each other's cultures."

There is an obvious partnership between children, parents, headmaster, teachers, governors and the local community. Laura Joyce, nine, has the last word: "The really good thing about this school is that we've got all sorts of different people. There are Irish, English, and lots from other countries and they all get on well together."

When I heard that Gillian Shephard planned to introduce league tables of primary schools this autumn, my first reaction was one of fury. Not because I disapprove of rankings, or because I think they tell me nothing, but because they come a critical few months too late.

My elder daughter starts school this September. What I would give to be able to see, now, a league table of 11-year-old test results for all the schools in my London borough and its neighbours. As a journalist, I am professionally trained to conduct research. But never have I spent so much time researching a subject to so little avail.

How are parents to determine whether a primary school is suitable for their child? In rural areas, the answer is simple: all the local parents send their children to the same school and word of mouth will suffice. In big cities, however, the choice is huge and the task correspondingly much harder. In my borough, Hammersmith and Fulham, there are 25 primary schools. Add in a couple of its neighbours, and the potential choice rises to 90.

So what could be simpler? I could call just three local education authorities and ask them to send me a list of test results for the schools in their area. But no, I was told, they were not allowed to do so. How about a batch of inspection reports? No, they have to be elicited from each individual school. And even then, some schools are reluctant to put them in the post. Ofsted, meanwhile, has inspected hardly any of them.

So then I tried ringing a couple of the better secondary schools in the area to ask which feeder schools they

Bring on league tables now to end school lottery

could recommend. Apparently nothing could be more invidious than to pass judgment on individual schools. Each time, from each expert, I was told: ask other parents.

The trouble is, most of the parents I know send their children to private schools. This is, perhaps, a problem peculiar to the London middle classes. But it is a big problem. The only ones I managed to contact, through friends of friends, had sent their children to the schools in question before the current head teacher had taken over. None could tell me what the new regimes were like.

So my husband and I determined to find out for ourselves. We had narrowed the choice down to three schools, but in a fairly haphazard, hearsay-dependent way.

At one school, we had the opportunity of a full interview with the headmaster, in which he patiently answered a myriad of questions. In another, the headmistress could be collared only during a parents' tour, as she showed us and ten other prospective parents around. At the third, we had a brief chat with the headmaster in the company of many other parents before two children showed us round.

When other parents are there, you feel bad about monopolising the head teacher; partly on their behalf, and also because you do not want

meaningless answer, such as "Somewhere in the middle" or "A bit of both". If I asked "Do you tend to agree or disagree with Chris Woodhead?", I would be told: "Some of his views I agree with, others I don't." If I asked whether they used whole-class teaching or phonics, they replied: "Good teaching requires a mix of different methods." All true, but not exactly informative.

Never have I had to take such an important decision on the basis of so little information. The choice we make will affect the schooling not just of our elder daughter but of her younger sister too, who will follow her a year later. Is this really what the Government means by parental choice?

Lies, damned lies and education statistics

We should take the inspectors' word for it if they find that standards are slipping, not rely on figures, says John O'Leary

Throughout the 1990s, Chief Inspectors of Schools have reported that one lesson in three was badly taught in English schools. Tony Blair even used the statistic (wrongly) when he launched Labour's latest education policy.

This year, the figure was mysteriously absent from the Chris Woodhead's annual report. Instead, we were told that half of primary schools and two fifths of secondaries needed to improve.

Why the change of measure? Presumably because the proportion of poor lessons is now 20 per cent, an apparent improvement at a time when concern over standards has seldom been higher.

The biggest change is in the four years of Key Stage 2, from seven to 11, by common consent the area of the curriculum that arouses greatest

concern. Last year 30 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory; this year it is down to 21 per cent.

Unless there has been dramatic improvement which Mr Woodhead is ignoring, the only possible explanations are that earlier estimates were exaggerated, or Ofsted inspectors are more easily satisfied than Her Majesty's Inspectorate.

Last month's test results hardly support the improvement theory, but even they have their critics. Education officers in Hampshire have discovered that up to 1,000 low-achievers, who took easier tests as well as those for pupils of higher ability, have been counted twice. The

result, which is likely to be repeated nationally, is that mathematics and science scores for the county were underestimated by 2 per cent.

The science results already stood out: while fewer than half of 11-year-olds reached their expected level in English and mathematics, in science, the subject said to pose most problems for primary teachers, the "pass rate" was 70 per cent. The obvious conclusion is that if all the tests had been set at the same standard as science we would have been celebrating a success story, not criticising primary schools.

Ofsted's explanation for the apparent improvement at Key Stage 2 is the

size of the sample. Now that the inspection cycle for primary schools is in full swing, data from more than 1,000 reports was available, compared with only 80 last year.

But, in that case, was it a responsible use of statistics to pass judgment previously on an entire age group on the basis of so few inspections? And how small was the sample in previous years?

The demand for statistics is now such that perfectly valid judgments are taken seriously only if they have a figure attached. Mr Woodhead is in an unenviable position to tell whether standards are satisfactory in English schools. His verdict must be taken

seriously, but what is the quality threshold that half of primary schools and two fifths of secondaries fail to meet? How do schools know which half they are in?

The dominance of statistics has obvious dangers, well illustrated by the counter-intuitive measures Mr Woodhead chose to omit from this week's report. Once they give the wrong message, the only option is to find another statistic.

The annual charade over GCSE and A-level results is another example, when falling pass rates are taken to mean failure but improvement automatically means lower examination standards.

Judging educational performance is notoriously difficult and often subjective. Perhaps we should accept that and take inspectors' word for it if they find that standards are slipping.

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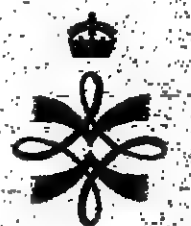
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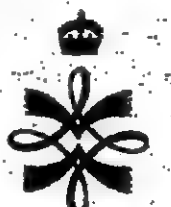
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Crystal Palace keep Lewington

Bassett leaps back on managerial merry-go-round

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

DAVE BASSETT gladly accepted one of the most precarious jobs in football — the managership of Crystal Palace — yesterday. He thus renews his acquaintance with Ron Noades, the Palace chairman, whose vigorous, hands-on approach has so often led to conflict with employees.

Bassett, 51, first laid out his ground rules before agreeing a 2½-year contract at the Endsleigh Insurance League first division club. "I'm no puppet for anyone," he said. "Ron is an outspoken chairman and I'm sure we will have our disagreements, but I said to him that, if he wants me to manage the club, he should let me get on with it. I wouldn't be here if I thought I wouldn't be allowed to do the job."

Steve Coppell, the technical director, and Ray Lewington and Peter Nicholas, the first-



Bassett: ground rules

team coaches, will continue at Selhurst Park. "I was keen that there should be no casualties when I came here," Bassett said. "Although I have some sympathy for Ray and Peter over what has happened, they have been doing good jobs and I'm sure they'll carry on doing so."

Lewington, however, still felt miffed. "I do feel a bit slighted by this," he said. "I was picking the team, but I did have a few ups and downs with Ron. I wanted the final decision on the team and tactics, but he didn't feel that was the way to go. Peter and myself have got nothing to be ashamed of. We can hold our heads high and we've just got to get on with it."

Bassett has masterminded six promotion-winning campaigns with Wimbledon, where he first worked with Noades, and Sheffield United. He also holds the Football League record for the briefest managerial tenure — three days — when he joined Palace in 1984 before changing his mind and returning to Wimbledon.

"I was a bit younger then and it seemed a good idea at the time," he said. "I soon realised I made the wrong decision." With Lewington falling out with Noades in public over team selection policy and Bassett still available after leaving Sheffield United by mutual consent in December, a change in Palace's backroom staff was always likely. That it involved an addition, rather than a replacement, was the only surprise.

More strange was a lengthy statement issued by the club, that continually stressed its commitment to "playing good football". Bassett, throughout his 16-year managerial career, has usually been associated with the up-and-at-'em, long-ball version of the beautiful game.

"I'm very conscious of being typecast like that; it sometimes irks me and irritates me," he said. "Football fashions and trends change and of course I would like to play eye-catching stuff, but you have to play in a style that best suits the players you've got. At the end of the day, it's all about winning. It's no good playing attractive football and then getting relegated, is it?"

Lewington will select the side for the last time tomorrow, when Palace play at Arsenal in the FA Cup. Bassett, before Bassett takes control, He was twice interviewed for the vacant Ireland job, but, after hearing nothing except that Mick McCarthy had been appointed, he pursued other options.

McCarthy's successor at Millwall was confirmed yesterday as Jimmy Nicholl, the Raith Rovers manager. Nicholl, 38, the former Northern Ireland and Manchester United defender, will take with him Martin Harvey, his assistant, at St. Mark's Park.

"I'm going to a new club and, within four months, we could be in the Premiership," Nicholl said. "Normally when you take over, the club is in a bit of a mess, but all Millwall need is a bit of fine tuning."

Cold weather wreaks havoc with FA Cup

By PETER BALL

THE snow may have been disappearing in many areas across the country yesterday, but it has already taken a heavy toll on the FA Cup. At the moment, next Saturday, the official date for the fifth round, is sure of only one tie: at most, it will have three out of the six scheduled.

"On Monday, five days before the start of the fifth round, we will still be without one conclusive tie," Steve Double, the Football Association press officer, said yesterday. "We really need the games at Swindon and Ipswich on Monday and Tuesday to be finished at the first attempt." The winners then would have home ties on February 17, joining Huddersfield Town, who will entertain Middlesbrough, or Wimbledon on that day in the one tie that is on.

However, even if Swindon Town or Oldham Athletic, Ipswich Town or Watford come through at the first attempt, the postponements

on Tuesday and the batch of draws on Wednesday evening mean that the fourth round will certainly not be completed before February 18, at the earliest. If Shrewsbury Town and Liverpool draw on that day, it would stretch until February 28, leaving the possibility that the fifth round could even extend until March 16, a week after the sixth round is due to be played.

Snow is not the only cause of disruption. The greater notice that police require and their increased input into the choice of dates are also significant. Yesterday, for example, Leeds United were unhappy at the West Yorkshire Police's decision to allow a second leg of their Coca-Cola Cup semi-final against Birmingham City on February 25, which could cost both clubs £100,000 in television fees if ITV is unable to show the match, originally to be played at 4pm, at the new time.

RESCHEDULED FA CUP TIES

Monday, Feb 12
Fourth round: Swindon Town v Oldham Athletic (7.45). Replay (if required): Sat Feb 17 (3.0).
Tuesday, Feb 13
Fourth round: Ipswich v Walsall (7.45). Replay (if required): Sat Feb 17 (7.45).
Fourth round replays: Crewe Alexandra v Southampton (7.30); Oxford United v Nottingham Forest (7.45); Manchester City v Middlesbrough (7.45).
Wednesday, Feb 14
Fourth round: Bolton v Leeds (7.45). Replay (if required): Wed Feb 21 (7.45).
Fourth round replays: Grimsby Town v West Ham United (7.45); Manchester City v Coventry City (7.45); Port Vale v Everton (7.45).
Saturday Feb 18
Fifth round: Ipswich Town or Walsall v

Aston Villa (3.0); Swindon Town or Oldham Athletic v Southampton or Crewe (3.0); Huddersfield Town v Middlesbrough or Wimbledon (3.0).
Sunday, Feb 18
Fourth round: Shrewsbury Town v Liverpool (11.0). Replay (if required): Wed Feb 28 (7.30).
Fifth round: Manchester United v Coventry or Manchester City (4.0).
Monday Feb 19
Fifth round: Nottingham Forest or Oxford United v Tottenham (8.0).
Wednesday, Feb 21
Fifth round: Bolton or Leeds United v West Ham United (7.45); Manchester City v Coventry City (7.45); Port Vale v Everton (7.45).
Wednesday, Feb 28
Fifth round: Shrewsbury Town or Liverpool v Charlton Athletic

Scattergun approach benefits world rugby

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

FOR years, rugby union has tended to cast a cloak of secrecy around the amounts of money available for the sport's development in a global sense. Yesterday, however, the International Rugby Football Board (IRFB) declared its financial hand.

From the profits of the past two World Cups, some £7.4 million has either been distributed to, or is earmarked for, nearly 50 countries. Moreover, the International Rugby Settlement, established in the Isle of Man in 1990, has funds amounting to £10 million — a pot that is still growing — for fostering the game worldwide.

"I see this as day one of the development of rugby union," Keith Rowlands, the retiring IRFB secretary, said in introducing Lee Smith, the board's first development and resource officer. It will be the function of Smith, 48, who was New Zealand's director of coaching and development, to monitor and advise on requests for grant aid.

"The litmus-paper test of how successful our system is will be seen after another two World Cups," Smith said. "When we can go into a tournament expecting a series of close games, then we will have an indication of rugby's growing maturity."

Some of the sorelines from the 1995 World Cup 145 points scored by New Zealand against Japan, 89 by Scotland against the Ivory Coast —

emphasised rugby's lack of strength in depth. The IRFB hopes that the rationalisation of its support programme will reduce the gap between the sport's haves and have-nots. Smith's role will involve telling any of the 71 countries that belong to the IRFB how to apply for aid. Not every application is a request for money, but for human resources in the shape of coaching, refereeing or development officers. "I bring an understanding of the game down to the grass roots," Smith said. "That should enable me to advise countries on programmes, methods and development."

The £5.7 million that has been distributed so far (another £1.7 million was approved only last week) consists of amounts large and small. "The scattergun effect will fertilise the game and will give a kick-start to many of those unions who are desperately short of money," Rowlands said. "The 1991 World Cup created an explosion of interest in the game and the growth of national unions, all of which are under-funded — one or two can't even afford to buy team shirts."

The requirements of unions boasting only six clubs clearly differ from established bodies such as that of Canada, whose grants have gone towards the establishment of an elite squad, but also towards an international rugby information centre in Ottawa.

Wales see virtue in youth policy

There is a curious relationship that arises between a player and his audience. The rapport for some can be immediate, but others, for all their success, have to work harder to get the approval of the crowd.

Arwel Thomas, of Wales, falls into the first category. Neil Jenkins into the second. It is not just a matter of the way they play. Jenkins may be perceived as more of a line-kicker than Thomas — but it is not actually the case — and, at this stage, he is infinitely more accurate as a place kicker; but the crowd response differs.

A player may have behavioural problems on the field, but this hardly stops the player from being the crowd's darling. Mickey Skinner, for England, contrived the image of a lovable rogue in most people's eyes in the way that Olivier Merle, of France, could not possibly be. Eric Cantona is more likely to enjoy an invitation as a dinner guest than Vinnie Jones.

Or it may be that the attraction is as trifling as the way a player looks and whether, in a crowd's opinion, he fits the part that they have set for him. Does he look the way a centre three-quarter should?

There is a difference, too, between the player who means to show off what he can do with a rugby ball and the one who simply shows off the one who is too big for his boots. Those on the Tanner Bank, who have a fine eye and ear for these things, know the difference. They discern the player who struts for his own sake



GERALD DAVIES

On Rugby Union

rather than swagger for the game's sake.

Yet there is more to it than this. There remains the definable quality that causes a favourable reaction in, some but that, in others, stirs feelings not so much of hostility as intolerance. There is something of this going on in Wales at present.

Wales lost to England last Saturday. This, in the distant past, would have been occasion enough for wailing and gnashing of teeth. The defeat in those days was not expected

England are perceived to have problems that are more to do with character and disposition than tactics. Deep-rooted conservative and preferring an institutional pattern, they will find it difficult within themselves to adopt the radical change that they wish.

They know that the pattern of their games can be good, very good — but only to a limited degree. Yet, if they were serious about change, they would have persisted longer, for instance, with Robinson in the back row and

'The kids did well' has been the most common refrain since last week

to happen, so things had better be put right — and soon.

More recent defeats have not been like this. They have aroused either a simple frustration or a collective bout of defeatism. The nation had grown to expect failure and wore their losses like a tattered garment of a shelterless wail. There was a sense of loss of hope; no anger, no passion.

Not so this week. From flimsy and rather fragile evidence, Wales feels not at all bad with events at Twickenham. This is not because

restored Hull to full back. If they wish to change, they will need to take risks. Is it in their character to do so?

As for the approbation of the crowd, at Twickenham, this balances on a knife-edge. It adopts a two-faced stance towards its own players. The players are either seriously in favour or joylessly out of it.

As for Wales, it is the approbation that, for the moment, is a distinctive feature. This week, nobody really dared, even if they thought so, to be even moderately critical



Howe points the way forward for the England women's football team at a training session in Slough

Howe to lift women's spirits

Andrew Longmore watches the England management bridge football's gender gap



On Howe tried to slip away from a vigorous five-a-side, only to be hauled back by that playground cry, "Hey, you're on our side." Poor Don. A pet-mell game of indoor football had not been on the agenda until now.

His hopes for a quiet morning in the sunshine at Bisham Abbey. Now, here he was, mixing it with the best in the land at the Montem Lane Leisure Centre in Slough.

Not even such mundane surroundings could eradicate the minor moment in the history of women's football that came with the balding head and distinctive tones. Not quite El Tel, but the next best thing — The Don, so universally respected within the game, he never gets the England job, he just comes with it. A name, anyway, to lift the spirits of the England women's team before their European championship qualifying tie with Portugal in Benavente, near Lisbon, on Sunday.

Not that long ago, the very notion of the most senior coach in the land investing his time with a bunch of girls would have been suitable cause for dismissal, but the Football Association runs the women's game now and is anxious to show that it means business. Howe's presence in Slough for what the FA, and the players, hope will be the first of many upmarket training sessions was a statement of intent, part PR exercise, part battle cry. Attention levels lifted dramatically.

"The girls were really buzzing," Debbie Bampton, the England captain, said. "It's good for our morale to know that a really big name is taking an interest in us. Everyone was stinging there, listening to every word."

An hour with the video and images of Gallit, Van Basten and AC Milan was followed

by a more down-to-earth five-a-side. Time only for imparting general principles, not particular tactics.

"I just wanted them to ask questions about what they were seeing," Howe said. "What shape was the defence? What was the midfield doing? I wanted them to see how a team like Milan presses, not as individuals but as a team, and to look at it as professionals, not just out of enjoyment."

They knew what was going on, they've been well coached, but if I can help them out just by being here, that's fine. People might say, "If Don's there, it can't be a sissies' game."

More important for the players was that unaccustomed feeling of recognition, of being part of the club that Howe, the England coaching

coordinator, hopes will also include schoolboy, under-19 and under-21 teams. England FC, as he terms it. Encouraging girls to play football is all part of the widespread brief.

"If this team is successful, more girls will be asking to play," Howe said. "They could do with a bit of publicity. At the moment, they're paying for all this themselves."

Howe's input was welcomed by Ted Copeland, the England team manager, who led the side to the quarter-finals of the World Cup in Sweden last summer. "When Don comes down, they feel, 'Hey, this is the big time,'" he said. "It really makes the players think that people at the highest level of the game are taking an interest. I think Don has been pleasantly surprised by what he's seen, too."

Indeed he had. "I've had good vibes," Howe said. "Only the gender trap kept catching him out. Man oh, watch your man. Difficult to change the habits of a lifetime in one morning."

Syed has double Olympic setback

MATTHEW SYED, England's table tennis No 1, suffered another unlucky blow to his chances of getting to Atlanta in July when Chen Xinhua, his men's doubles partner, withdrew yesterday from the Olympic qualifying competition in Nantes tomorrow, citing club commitments (Richard Eaton writes).

Because Syed just failed to come through the Olympic singles qualifying competition at Manchester three weeks ago, he is experiencing misfortune in duplicate. Olympic doubles rules require at least one partner to have qualified in singles, and although Chen has done so by virtue of a high world ranking — 19 — Syed has to wait and see whether he gets a wild card for finishing as singles first reserve. That will be too late for him to go to Nantes.

Lewis booked

Boxing: Lennox Lewis, no longer the No 1 challenger to Frank Bruno, the World Boxing Council heavyweight champion, could meet Ray Mercer at Madison Square Garden, New York, in May. "We don't have a solid deal, but we're working on it for May 10," Lou DiBella, the senior vice-president of HBO, the American cable television channel, said yesterday.

If the Lewis-Mercer bout is confirmed, Evander Holyfield and Tim Witherpoon, the former champions, could appear in separate contests on the same bill.

Norman adrift

Golf: Greg Norman, the world No 1, who is controversially being paid appearance money in the Ford Open championship in Adelaide, lay seven shots off the pace after shooting a 74, two over par, in the first round yesterday. Glenn Jayner and Bradley Hughes, Normans' Australian compatriots, shared the lead with 67s.

Holders happy

Hockey: Old Loughmontians are hoping to retain their national hockey title at Crystal Palace tonight, with Julian Hall and Nick Thompson to guide their fortunes.

Tough battle

Rackets: Neil Smith, the British professional champion, lived dangerously against David Mackay, the unseeded Tombridge professional, before reaching the semi-final of the Lacoste British Open championship in five games. He will play Willie Boney.

Tanner in squad

Cycling: John Tanner, the winner of the Premier Calendar road race series last year, has gained a place in Great Britain's six-man squad for the inaugural Tour of Langkawi, Malaysia, from March 1 to 10.

Hicks continues to confound rankings

By PHIL YATES

ANDY HICKS, who is attempting to become the first wild-card entrant to capture the Benson and Hedges Masters snooker title, reached the semi-finals of the invitation tournament yesterday with a surprise 6-3 victory over John Parrott at the Wembley Conference Centre.

Hicks makes a lucrative habit of reserving his best for the game's showpiece occasions. As the World No 17, he had no automatic right to compete at the Masters, but, after runs to the semi-finals of the world and United Kingdom championships, last season, it was hardly a surprise when he was included in the field.

Many players of proven ability find it difficult to do themselves justice on their first appearance at Wembley, but Hicks settled down immediately. He constructed three century breaks during a 5-2 first-round win over David Roe, played solidly to beat James Wattana 6-4 and out-potted Parrott to secure a semi-final against Ronnie O'Sullivan, the defending champion, or Darren Morgan.

Despite making the two highest breaks of the match, a 118 clearance in the first frame and a 91 in the fourth, Hicks trailed 3-2 before winning the sixth with a blue-to-black clearance after a poor safety shot from Parrott. Hicks, a left-handed Devonian, then

comfortably won the next two frames for a 5-3 advantage before completing victory by sinking the black to a middle pocket in the ninth.

Stephen Hendry, who monopolised the Masters between 1980 and 1993, recorded his 25th victory in 27 matches in the event by recovering from a 4-2 deficit to defeat John Higgins 6-4 on Wednesday evening.

Hendry had prevailed in only two of his previous eight matches this year and, in forced errors continued to plague him early on against Higgins, a 5-4 winner when they met in the corresponding round of the Liverpool Victoria Charity Challenge five weeks ago.

The turning point arrived in the seventh frame. Hendry, 58-0 in arrears at one stage, eventually salvaged it with a yellow-to-pink clearance before finishing impressively on the back of breaks of 55, 64, and a 144 total clearance.

That was the second highest break in the 21-year history of the tournament, exceeded only by a 147 maximum from Kirk Stevens, of Canada, in 1994, and makes the world champion an overwhelming favourite to win the £10,000 bonus for the highest break.

Hendry will tomorrow meet Jimmy White, a player whom he has beaten in four world championship finals.

Results page 37

Students of sport abounding in land of the springbok

A.S. NEILL, founder and then headmaster of Summerhill School, said that, as none of his pupils had gone on to become Members of Parliament, he must have got it about right.

At Hilton College, near Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, I asked the second master how many Hiltonians had attained international status in sport and he sent for the marketing manager who gave me the list: 15 cricketers, including McLean, Procter, Crookes; eight rugby players — P.G.A. Johnstone, G. Telchmann; 13 polo internationalists, ten hockeyists, two tennis players, and a dozen representatives of assorted disciplines from hot-air ballooning to rifle shooting.

"You must have got it about right," I suggested to Gordon Crossley, who, when teaching at Gresham's, Holt, in the late 1960s, scored 103 against Wisbech. Crossley said that the school was best known for its academic achievements, but then he would say that R.J.O. Meyer used to say it about Millfield.

Last week, when the national football team won the



FREUD ON FRIDAY

ional football team won the African Nations Cup, an excited radio commentator shouted: "We have arrahved; look out world."

Bafana Bafana (the boys) success, at football followed the lifting of rugby's World Cup. Test series victory against England and there are bullish noises coming out in respect of South Africa's Davis Cup tennis chances.

It seemed a good idea to examine the infrastructure. You turn off the N3 about 30 miles north of Durban at the Hilton exit. The sign shows Hilton to the right, Hilton College left and I turned left and drove and

drove along a handsomely tarmacked road by the Umgeni river through stunning countryside, past forests of yellow-wood and pine. That is the school drive; seven kilometres on, you reach the school gate.

Hilton was founded as a school for 50 children by an Anglican minister in 1872 and the wisdom to buy up land — 3,500 acres. Today, there are 500 male pupils, about 10 per cent non-white. I arrived during central hour: 1.45.2.45, when boys can do whatever they like but not games. "If we lost prohibition, they'd all be out there playing touch rugby and cricket," I was told, and by 3pm it was all better.

By the entrance, beyond the slave bell, a boy was playing the one-hole golf course. Two sets of six cricket nets were fully occupied with three bowlers per batsman. There were four practice games. You could tell because the boys wore white shorts; longs are reserved for matches.

The pool was filled with boys swimming and boys diving; athletes ran along the drive and around the hal-



Hilton College, the South African school renowned for sporting achievement

lowed turf of the school's rugby ground, where crowds of 7,000-8,000 come when Hilton play against their arch-rivals, Michaelhouse.

Coaches shunted boys to the river for rowing and canoeing, to the lake for sailing, in the gymnasium above the three full-size basketball courts, a couple of dozen boys were using state-of-the-art machines, with that

many again busy at the hoops. There is an indoor cricket net in the corner. Squash is hugely popular. Hilton play in a summer squash league and the place abounds with tennis courts.

As this is the cricket season and the eyes of South Africans are on Hansie Cronje and his men on the sub-continent, I asked how many of the boys play competitive cricket.

There are four under-14 teams; also under-15 A, B, C and D and under-16 sides; then there are five open sides ... and for every boy who gets to play, there is probably another one waiting for his place.

On Saturdays, when Hilton plays matches against other schools (they also compete in the Natal Witness evening cricket league), parents come

from wherever to sit around the ground eating picnics and watching their lads in the under-15 Cs, urging them to hone their skills and maybe make it to the under-15 Bs. Last year, Hilton sent its team to tour England and play in the Oundle cricket festival: their record was played 13, lost one.

"Who beat you?" "Durban High School in the final at Oundle."

"Was that a big blow?" "Well," the cricket master said, "we try to win, but we don't have post mortems. Sport occupies a high level in South African consciousness. Before we were isolated, we were the best sportsmen."

"Why?" "Well, it's the weather and the emphasis on outdoors and our history of success in international, probably beginning with the brilliant fielding of Cheersham's Rhodes in which McGlew and McLean and Enderby did what Rhodes does now."

I stand behind a row of six nets, watching the action and notice a fair-haired boy of 14 taking a 16-pace run and bowling with a high, smooth

action on a length, on a line, at considerable pace.

"That boy has a terrific future," I was about to say when I noticed a 13-year-old in the next net late-cutting a shortish ball as handsomely as did P.G.H. Fender on the Woodbine cigarette cards of my youth.

The fact is that the place abounds with talent and ambition and sportsmanship ("please do not mention that one of the fathers at Michaelhouse is suing the school for excluding his son from the team about to tour Australia"). And as I leave this hive of sun-blessed activity, the golfer at the gate is still at it drive, chip, putt. Next year, they are going to build another hole: a 100 per cent increase in sports provision which will be nicely executed by some of the three-figure army of Hilton groundsman.

Sunshine and inexpensive labour are helpful in the pursuit of sporting excellence, but love of the game and pride of their country is what gives South Africa the edge; this is a land of professional amateurs.

British driver leads weird and wonderful launch of the new Sauber-Ford Herbert kick-starts grand prix career

FROM OLIVER HOIT
IN BADEN, SWITZERLAND

WEIRD was not what we were expecting in the solid depths of Switzerland, but weird was most definitely what we got. The launch of the new Sauber-Ford Formula One car here yesterday cast Johnny Herbert and Heinz-Harald Frentzen, its drivers, in the roles of mildly embarrassed extras in a costume musical that made *Star Trek* look tame by comparison and put the extravagance of the Benetton launch in Sicily on Monday in the shade.

Imagine a science fiction version of *Springtime for Hitler* from *The Producers* and you might begin to get a picture of the cavorting on stage at the Space Dreams theatre in this village outside Zurich. There were men and women painted silver, multi-coloured lasers and a vast array of pointy caps. "We'll win the race, we will be heroes," the cast sang as Herbert and Frentzen looked on. "We will go faster, we will not be zeros."

It took a while for the significance of all this to sink in, but eventually it did. "We are now taking you to a different world," a Sauber official announced from the stage. "We are trying to take you to a new dimension this season, to go where no man has been before."

After what seemed like an eternity, the singing stopped and Herbert talked his way through the next act, an episode that Great Britain's most popular driver is determined will not be his epitaph after a fraught year in the shadow of Michael Schumacher, the world champion, at Benetton in 1995. Attempts to sideline him undermined his racing credibility, although he did collect his first two grand prix victories.

"It was a hard year last year," Herbert, 31, said. "From the start, there seemed to be rumours that every race would be my last race. It was



Herbert commands centre stage at the launch of the new Sauber-Ford while Frentzen, right, and Norberto Fontana, the team's test driver, look on

stupid and it must have been coming from somewhere. Looking back on it, I think it's affected my performance and upset my psychologically.

"I really lost all the enjoyment out of racing. I hardly spoke to Flavio Briatore, the managing director, in the second half of the season and it was very difficult. Coming here, they have been friendly

and welcoming and it feels as though I have got out of jail. "So far, Heinz-Harald has shared everything with me, which is a big difference to what happened with Schumacher, and I just have to make sure it stays that way. After last season, I got the feeling that people think that I'm not as good as they thought I was. I know that I

am, but I have got a lot left to prove in Formula One." Herbert accepted that he may find himself pitched straight into a situation like the one that he laboured under at Benetton. Frentzen is one of the most highly-rated young drivers and has already been at Sauber for two years. He is the team's No. 1, but Herbert is confident that there will be

more pooling of information this time. It could be a good year, too. Sauber are powered by Ford V10 engines, there are high hopes of the new chassis and the new pairing of drivers is being touted as an "explosive double package".

Herbert said that he would like to gain a measure of revenge for the treatment he received from Schumacher last year by beating him in a race this season. "Schumacher is now at Ferrari," Herbert thinks that Damon Hill is the favourite for the world championship and that Jean Alesi will thrive at Benetton — and, like everyone else, he was mesmerised by the characters on stage yesterday. "I tried to sing along," he said, "but I couldn't keep up."

Faldo's sinking feelings subside

FROM A CORRESPONDENT
IN SAN DIEGO

A YEAR ago, Nick Faldo was seriously worried about his putting and was questioning his decision to abandon the European golf circuit for the more consistent conditions prevailing on the US PGA Tour.

A missed three-footer caused him to miss the halfway cut in the Buick Invitational and it was not until he captured the Doral Open, his fourth victory in the United States, two weeks later, that his fears subsided.

Faldo yesterday returned to the two Torrey Pines courses at La Jolla for the Buick event this week at ease with himself and with a putting stroke that he is convinced is close to matching that with which he won five major champion-

Woosnam struggles in heat at Sun City

IAN WOOSNAM made a disappointing start in pursuit of a third successive tournament victory yesterday. He wilted in the heat and finished the opening round of the Data Dimension Pro-am golf tournament at Sun City, South Africa, six shots off the pace.

Nick Price, a former winner of the Million Dollar Golf Challenge on the Gary Player Country Club course, shot a 68, to share the lead with Sven Struver, of Germany.

The tournament, the first of three back-to-back events that form part of the European Tour, is being played over two par-72 courses, the Lost City and Gary Player Country Club. Today, the players swap to the alternate course and then play the final two rounds on the Gary Player course.

Woosnam, of Wales, fresh from PGA European Tour victories in Singapore and Perth, shot a 74. Other European struggles included Costantino Rocca, of Italy, on 73. Per-Ulrik Johansson, of Sweden, 78, and David Feherty, from Northern Ireland, on 79.

Price, the world No 2 from South Africa, and Struver went out early, on the Lost City and Gary Player courses respectively, and held the lead throughout a long, hot day in which rounds took up to six hours to complete.

"I think it's going to be very tough to adjust from playing the Bayview grass at Lost City to the Kikuyu at Gary Player Country Club," Price said, "especially when it comes to chipping."

Struver, 28, whose best finish is a fourth place in the Irish Open, managed five birdies and a solitary bogey at the par-three 4th. "I played the best I've done in a while," he said. "I hit 18 greens and missed only two fairways — and then only by a metre."

Thomas Levett, the first French golfer to compete on the US PGA Tour, in 1993, shot a disastrous 90 yesterday, with halves of 48 and 42. In with a better chance of playing the last two days are his compatriots, Christian Cevier, 74, and Tim Piantcini, 75.

Wayne Westman was disqualified for practising on the Gary Player course after his 72 on the Lost City. He hit "about ten five-irons down the 10th fairway", and maintained that it had "always been regarded as a practice tee". However, Andy McFee, a Tour official, ruled that both layouts jointly constituted the tournament course.

THE TIMES
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ATHLETICS

EVENTS: Indoor meeting: Men: 60m: F. Fiedler (GER) 7.82sec; 100m: J. H. Smith (USA) 10.25sec; 200m: J. H. Smith (USA) 21.50sec; 400m: D. Mills (USA) 45.93sec; 800m: J. C. Viallet (FRA) 1:48.10sec; 1,500m: J. P. Rono (KEN) 3:40.02; 3,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 7:43.15; 5,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 15:55.50; 10,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 32:44.01; 20,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 64:15.15; 30,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 95:45.15; 40,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 127:15.15; 50,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 158:45.15; 60,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 190:15.15; 70,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 221:45.15; 80,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 253:15.15; 90,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 284:45.15; 100,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 316:15.15; 110,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 347:45.15; 120,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 379:15.15; 130,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 410:45.15; 140,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 442:15.15; 150,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 473:45.15; 160,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 505:15.15; 170,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 536:45.15; 180,000m: J. Viallet (FRA) 568:15.15; 190,000m: J. 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Militant man has reconstructed himself

Many unkind things have been said about Peter York's *Eighties*, including the ludicrous suggestion that the 1980s happened too recently to merit a retrospective series. Well, maybe so, if you spent the century's silliest decade making meticulous notes of what did what to whom and why. But, if it is as for me, all a bit of a blur, then York's ridiculously stylised reminders of a ridiculously stylised ten years have been rather fun.

Now, what has all that got to do with last night's television, you ask. Two things. First, that at the current rate of transformation I predict that York will have turned completely into Peter York by the year 2003. And secondly, that *My Brilliant Career* (BBC2) has — like York's series — been a well-timed and entertainingly executed reminder of people and events which, without a bit of help, could easily be forgotten.

Last night it was Hanton's turn to take a trip down short-term memory lane, back to the strawberry fields of militant-run Liverpool, one of my Big Three narrators, Veronica Hyks, was wheeled out for the occasion but she hardly got a word in. For Hanton, as we were quickly reminded, has a prodigious gob on him.

These days he supplements his income as a public relations man and television presenter by picking up £1,000 a night on the after-dinner speaking circuit. The pattern, as you would expect from one of the world's great self-publicists, is silky smooth, particularly on the question of would he do it all again? Yes, if it could be 1983 again but not in 1996.

"Life's very different, politics are very different, the economy's very different, people are very different, and eh, Derek Hatton's very different." The timing of the table top thud to coincide with the

defiantly scouse "eh" was immaculate. As his doting father said: "He could go on the stage tomorrow and be a comedian." The only question is — how would he tell?

However, it was Hanton's past, rather than his future, that was the matter in hand. His father interviewed, rather successfully, while having his hair cut recalled his son's early career as a fireman and his little-known involvement in the church. He was as fervent about religion as he became about politics, recalled a friendly curate. The same curate would later compare Hanton's story to that of Jesus Christ, which seemed to be stretching religious metaphor a little.

The key section dealing with the shambled glory days of militant Liverpool was cleverly constructed, with contributions from — colleagues, family and political opponents all interested with symbolic footage of

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

Everton bearing Manchester United in the FA Cup Final. The infamous day when this Trotskyite city council actually secured extra funding from a Tory government was marked by the Everton skipper lifting the FA Cup. The crowd roared victory.

Patrick Jenkin, whose Environment Department provided the additional funds, was in no doubt where he had gone wrong. "The

one mistake I made was trusting Derek Hatton and they used that to try and smash my political career." As summaries go, it appeared spot-on and archive footage made it difficult to disagree with Hanton when he described Jenkin as "incredibly naïve".

That, of course, marked the turning point. Mr Thatcher was "incandescent with fury", Mr Kinross incandescent with concern that if Labour councils went round issuing redundancy notices to their own employees he could kiss the next general election goodbye. Hanton and his allies were expelled from the party, a decision which in Hanton's words, "marked the end of an era".

It also once he had rather skated over the subsequent police inquiry and Hanton's acquittal on fraud charges marked the end of a much more of blonde hair and highly successful series. Its subjects, our fallen heroes, have been

tempted by the chance to air their grievances, while we wallow in delicious Schadenfreude. A most enjoyable combination.

Over on BBC1, *The Vet* was also coming to an end — and very silly it was, too. "Mum, she's got the bull walking around the yard," shouted Stephen down the telephone to his mother, Jennifer (Suzanne Burden). Nothing too complicated there, you might think.

After all, by that time we had spent half an hour in the company of the eccentric Miss Paley and her bull with the broken leg. Jennifer had set it herself — as those who have been paying attention to the opening titles knew she would. Surely then the words "she", "bull", "walking", and "yard" would ring a bell. But no. Cue much more of blonde hair and the adoption of a series of puzzled expressions: "What do you mean,

Stephen?" Oh spare us — the sooner she runs off with the RSPCA man the better.

Mind you, now poor Patricia (Diana Kent) has met her end in a car crash the whole field of unresolved sexual tension is wide open again. Chris (Richard Hawley) may be consumed with grief at the moment but with a sneaking feeling that if and when a new series comes around he might just be ready for a little gentle flirting. As long as he remembers to speak slowly... well, who knows?

Finally, *Taker Takers* (ITV) was notable for two things, a technically impressive beginning (a single tracking shot that appeared to go through two glass windows, across a street and up a flight of stairs) and an old-fashioned but still gripping finale. You can't beat a good roadblock. What came in between wasn't bad either.

● Lynne Truss is on holiday

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MOTOR RACING 37

HERBERT LAUNCHES
HIMSELF ONTO NEW
TRACK AT SAUBER

SPORT

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 9 1996

RUGBY LEAGUE 38

AMATEURS BANKING
ON SPIRIT TO
SEE OFF TRINITY

Organisers suggest UN intervention in World Cup crisis

Cork joins England injury list

By SIMON WILDE

FIVE days before their opening World Cup match, England's cricketers find their fitness concerns assuming worrying proportions. Dominic Cork, their principal strike bowler, yesterday left the field after sending down only 13 balls during England's second warm-up match at Aitchison College, in which they beat the local Lahore side by six wickets.

Cork is experiencing pain in the tendon area below his right knee, brought on, basically, by wear and tear. The best cure, as Cork himself knows from similar trouble with his left knee two years ago, is physiotherapy and rest, although he might also require a cortisone injection that would put him out of action for at least a week.

England's first match is against New Zealand in Ahmedabad on Wednesday, their second against United Arab Emirates in Peshawar on Sunday week. While they could afford to be without Cork for

injury is likely to take at least a week to mend, hopefully ten days at the worst," Wayne Morton, the England physiotherapist, said, "but we will know more in a day or two."

The England management is awaiting clarification about a replacement, if one is needed. Illingworth is unsure whether another batsman must be chosen from the 18 names that England submitted to the organisers last month — which would mean a call-up for Mark Ramprakash — or if others could be considered. If that were the case, Nasser-Hussain would enter the reckoning.

Earlier this week, it was disclosed that Darren Gough is carrying a hamstring injury, although he played yesterday and took one wicket as England restricted their opponents to 166 for nine from 50 overs on a slow pitch.

Their most effective bowlers, though, were Richard Illingworth and Neil Smith, the spinners, who took three for 24 and two for 29 respectively.

England's progress was also slow, the match-winning partnership of 76 between Russell and Fairbrother occupying 23 overs.

The ever-reliable Russell, who scored 60 the day before, made a valuable 38 after yet another middle-order collapse had seen four wickets fall for 12 runs. Hick was out for eight and Thorpe for four. Earlier, Atherton, who top-scored with 41, and Stewart put on 79 for the first wicket.

Jagmohan Dalmiya, the convenor of Pilcom, the organising committee, claimed yesterday that it had asked the International Cricket Council (ICC) to request the United Nations to send an observer to Sri Lanka to establish whether it was unsafe to stage matches there, after the suicide bombing in Colombo.

Australia and West Indies have risked forfeiting fixtures by refusing to play on the island.

The ICC's office in London had no knowledge of such a request yesterday, and David Richardson, its chief executive, spent the day en route to Calcutta, where a meeting will be held tomorrow to discuss the crisis. Inderjit Singh Bindra, another member of



Cork limps from the field after playing only a brief part in the second warm-up match in Lahore yesterday

the organising committee, held out little hope of a solution. "I am not aware of any compromise formula. It's too late for that," he said yesterday. "We will not shift matches out of Sri Lanka. The only choice before Australia

and West Indies is to fulfil their commitments."

Glenn Turner, the coach of New Zealand, who arrived in Bombay on Wednesday, spoke confidently yesterday of his side's prospects. In recent months, New Zealand have

played one-day series against India and Pakistan, losing the first narrowly and drawing the second, despite Turner introducing new players.

"We could not have hoped for a better build-up," Turner said. "To be without two of our

most outstanding batsmen of the past few years, Martin Crowe and Mark Greatbatch, is a big blow, but ours is a young side that can make up for their absence."

Diary, page 16

Davis finds the cue to heaven after untimely break with past

By PHIL YATES

THOSE casual snooker players who pick up any old cue out of the rack at their local club must wonder what all the fuss is about. Why does Steve Davis, six times a world champion, feel that he is in "heaven" after finding success with a new cue the same weight as his old one and just half an inch longer?

Davis has won 70 tournaments — more than any player in the game — since 1978, but none in the past 13 months. The drought began when he accidentally broke the cue that had brought him all his important titles. Until last month, a cue borrowed from his father had proved a poor substitute, so Davis's euphoria after his vintage 6-0 victory — using the new cue — over Ken Doherty in the Benson and Hedges Masters at Wembley earlier this week was understandable.

The histories of billiards and snooker have repeatedly demonstrated that, while a cue alone cannot make a champion, the loss of a champion's old faithful will probably sink him.

In 1925, Willie Smith went to Australia to face the great Walter Lindrum at billiards. Lindrum was the finest ever exponent of the three-ball game, but a group of local gamblers, wishing to give their man an edge, smashed Smith's cue. Years later, aged 90, Smith was asked how he got over it. "I never did," he said.

Stephen Hendry would never play a fortnight's match for a tea service, as Smith did during that tour, but he has suffered the same kind of loss. In 1990, during a tournament in Reading, Hendry, who had captured the first of his five world titles six months earlier, walked into a hotel restaurant looking desperate. He had left his cue unattended for a couple of minutes and was clinging to the hope that its subsequent disappearance was some sort of ill-judged practical joke. It soon proved not to be so. For the next two days, Hendry was frantic enough for his manager to offer a £10,000 reward.

The exact circumstances surrounding the return of the cue, that has been the decisive instrument in the sport this decade, are still mysterious, but the Rex Williams Powerglove model, that would have cost no more than £20 in any good sports shop, was discovered on a piece of waste ground. The usually undemonstrative Scot hugged and kissed

it, murmuring "My baby, my baby." Hendry's anxiety had been intensified by the knowledge that, three years earlier, Cliff Thorburn, the 1980 world champion, had arrived for a match without his cue, had borrowed another and been white-washed 5-0.

Having a cue sabotaged or stolen is one thing, but Darren Morgan's original cue, reached the end of its usefulness at the hands of his father, who smashed it over his knee during an argument. Later, Morgan Sr threw the replacement javelin-like out of the house. It landed, tip down at the bottom of the garden, no damage was done and, a few months later, his son used it to win the 1987 world amateur championship.

The rules are straightforward when it comes to a cue's dimensions. It has to be at least 3ft long and "must conform to the accepted shape and design". The



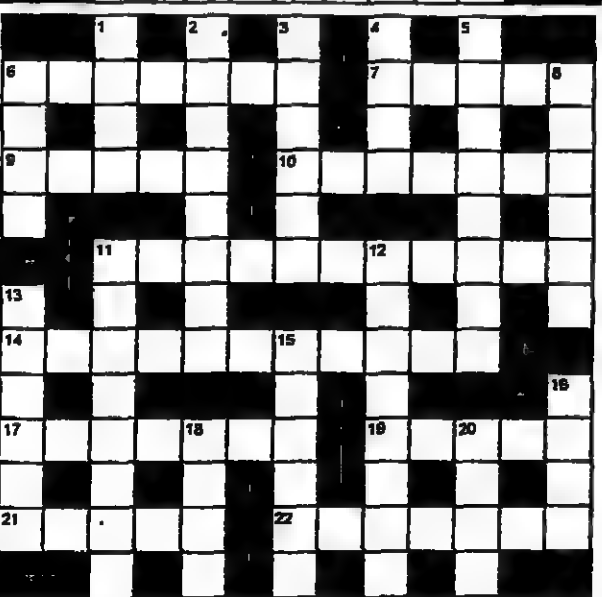
authorities felt it necessary to introduce any legislation only after the Alec Brown fountain pen incident in 1938.

Brown was playing at Thurston's, the professional showcase of the game in Leicester Square, when, with the cue-ball marooned in the middle of the pack of reds, he produced a pen-like cue of no more than five inches, complete with tip. The cue, made by his father, allowed a potentially tricky shot to be played with ease, but the referee awarded a foul, ruling that the implement was outside the spirit. If not the letter, of the law.

Davis will have no such problem when he faces Alan McManus at Wembley today. To the television viewer, his cue will look like any other: but to Davis, it will look like the only one in the world.

Leading article, page 17
Parrot surprise, page 36

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 700

- ACROSS
- Holy Land sea: church porch (7)
 - Thorough mixture (5)
 - Place for assembly (5)
 - Set of victims' names (3,4)
 - Mercy stroke (4,5)
 - A vivid blue (11)
 - Amount due but unpaid (7)
 - Hammer (for calling to order) (5)
 - Approves; parasites (5)
 - A prehistoric period (4,3)
- DOWN
- (Scots) valley (4)
 - God be praised! (8)
 - Procedure, technique (6)
 - Be close against (4)
 - Tender; in frail health (8)
 - Deliver; perform (4)
 - Be indecisive (6)
 - On special offer (3-5)
 - Strange, unwelcome events (6-2)
 - Familiar (with) (2,4)
 - Make rope descent (6)
 - Ventilation duct (4)
 - In addition (4)
 - Calf meat (4)

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Dumitrescu denied work permit

By PETER BALL AND DAVID MADDOCK

THE Bosman decision may have opened the gates to footballers from countries within the European Community, but the Department of Employment is beginning to flex its muscles over other nationalities. Yesterday, it refused work permits to Marc Hotiger, the Swiss-Liechtensteiner international full back at Everton, and Ilie Dumitrescu, West Ham United's Romanian international.

"We will fight this all the way," Harry Redknapp, the West Ham manager, said last night. "You are talking about two world class players here, and I'm not happy about it. I never expected a problem with a work permit, but we won't leave it at that."

Everton were equally unhappy. "We are very, very disappointed, and are now considering our options and response," Michael Dunford, the Everton secretary, said. "It is possible we will request further discussion with the department. Marc's career is

now in limbo, and he knows, unless it is sorted out, he must leave the country in June."

Hotiger and Dumitrescu had been given permits when they first came to Great Britain to join Newcastle United and Tottenham Hotspur, respectively. They have now fallen foul of the rule that requires them to play 75 per cent of their team's games, even though the Football Association and the Premier League are understood to have

approved their applications for a renewal. The Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), however, protective of home-grown talent, was less supportive.

Hotiger joined Everton three weeks ago for £700,000. He played 51 games for Newcastle last season, but fell foul of the three foreigners rule in the pre-Bosman days of this season, with Ginola, Albert, Gillespie and Šrnicek taking preference.

Even so, the department's statement that "he had only played in 66 per cent of Newcastle's games in the last 12 months, not the required 75 per cent", seems harsh.

The department's position over Dumitrescu, who has been out of favour at Tottenham since the departure of Osvaldo Ardiles as manager, is more comprehensible, but the implications are that an overseas player cannot afford a spell out of form or out of favour.

"Dumitrescu has played for his country regularly, he has been outstanding in the World Cup," Redknapp said. "He

has not played enough games for Tottenham, but that is why players appear on the transfer list. Tottenham bought Ruel Fox because he wasn't getting a game at Newcastle. I sold Don Hutchison to Sheffield United because he wasn't in our team."

Claudio Brancio, the Brazil international full back, agreed an 18-month contract with Middlesbrough yesterday, but that deal, too, is subject to the player being granted a work permit. Brancio has 83 caps to his credit but has appeared infrequently for his country in recent seasons. He would appear, though, to have the support of the PFA — a significant factor.

Faustino Asprilla is the next player with an appointment at the Department of Employment. The Colombia international completed his £6.7 million move to Newcastle yesterday. There should be no doubts about that one — at least as long as he keeps a place in the team.

Palace appointment, page 36
FA Cup chaos, page 36



Hotiger: not enough games

Catt presents England with dilemma

By DAVID HANDS RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

MIKE CATT has thrown a further twist into what has already been a tortuous rugby union season for England by telling Bath that he seeks to play full back. Ostensibly, that is good news for the English selectors, who yesterday announced a 35-strong training squad, but not if Catt spends the remainder of the season playing second-team rugby.

Last year, he played two internationals at stand-off half, but it is as a full back that he first appeared on the international scene and Catt has decided that his future lies in a No 15 shirt.

Since Stuart Barnes retired, however, he has been playing stand-off for Bath, who have Jonathan Callard, another

international, at full back and Callard is preferred for the Pilkington Cup fifth-round tie at Wakefield tomorrow. Catt takes his place in the second-team game with Orrell.

"The only way for me to contribute to the expansive game England want to play

Wales see virtue of youth — 36

in the next World Cup is to get used to playing that way at full back regularly for Bath," Catt said. "I am a better full back than stand-off, but I might be in the second team all season."

If Callard, 30 and capped five times, has anything to do with it, he will be. "I've faced challenges before, but I've got to get

on with it," he said. "No one person is bigger than the club and none of us is indispensable. I wouldn't say this challenge was too daunting."

Three full backs are named in the England squad to train at Marlow on Tuesday, Tim Simpson joining Callard and Catt; but, if Catt cannot out his colleague over the next fortnight, England will have a hard decision to make when they name the XV to play Scotland at Murrayfield on March 2. However, irregular appearances in the Bath front row last season did not prevent John Walker, the prop, earning a place in England's World Cup squad.

The training squad, announced three England A forwards — David Sims, Garath Archer and Richard Cockerill — and also includes Tony Underwood.

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Chinese nuclear sale damages relations with US

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

TENSIONS between China and the United States are escalating on several fronts. They took another unsettling turn yesterday with revelations that Peking has sold nuclear weapons technology to Pakistan. That could lead to Washington imposing sanctions running to billions of dollars, but President Clinton may waive the penalties for the sake of American jobs and to avoid making links even more strained.

The nuclear proliferation issue comes on top of other flashpoints, including human rights abuses, China's sabre-rattling over Taiwan and its continued piracy of American software, music and videos.

There is a strong chance that China could become an election issue for Mr Clinton. His campaign taunt four years ago that President Bush was codding the "butchers" of Peking could be hurled back by Republican foes.

Mr Clinton is under pressure not to impose sanctions on China from Boeing, Westinghouse and other big corporations whose orders from Peking account for thousands of jobs. But China has been identified by the CIA as selling specialised magnets needed to refine weapons-grade uranium to Pakistan. Under American laws, Mr Clinton could retaliate by cutting off all US government loan guarantees amounting to nearly \$10 billion (\$6.5 billion) to American companies doing business with China.

To waive these sanctions, Mr Clinton would have to declare that the business deals were vital to American national interests. The decision is a quandary for the President. To impose sanctions would worsen relations with China and upset American companies. Not to do so would upset Democrats who think that halting the spread

of nuclear weapons comes before business interests. "Failure to impose sanctions would make the world a more dangerous place," said Nancy Pelosi, a liberal Democrat and China specialist on the House intelligence committee.

In fact, business links between China and America have become so intertwined that both nations would suffer if global politics and confrontation were allowed to intrude. Last year the United States exported goods and services worth more than \$12 billion to China, accounting for 200,000 American jobs, while Chinese exports approached \$40 billion.

This huge trade deficit is further stoked by China's refusal to honour an agreement reached a year ago to shut more than 30 factories churning out illegal copies of American CDs, videos and computer programmes. Mickey Kantor, the US Trade Representative,



Taiwanese soldiers practise hand-to-hand combat during military exercises in the east coast city of Hualien

has warned China that unless the piracy ceases he will impose 100 per cent duties on more than a billion dollars in Chinese exports.

China appears unwilling to compromise in return for any accommodating American stance. Two years ago Mr Clinton agreed to separate

trade from human rights issues, yet China continues its crack down on dissidents and other abuses.

In Washington this week, Li Zhaoxing, the Chinese deputy Foreign Minister, insisted that Taiwan as a renegade province and refuses to rule out force to retake it. China is agitated over Taiwan moves

towards democracy, with voters electing a president for the first time next month.

US intelligence believes that China will stage military exercises near the island to intimidate its leaders. US officials warned China that any unprovoked attack would have grave consequences.

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Peking issues weapons warning

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

CHINA said yesterday that the United States must stop selling advanced weapons to Taiwan if tensions between Peking and Taipei are to be eased, and it urged the Taiwanese authorities to abandon efforts to break out of diplomatic isolation.

Shan Goufang, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, reiterated Peking's commitment to peaceful reunification with Taiwan, but underlined China's threat to invade Taiwan if the island was attacked or if Taipei abandoned its avowed goal of reunification and declared its independence.

"The United States must not sell large amounts of advanced weapons to Taiwan for tensions to be eliminated," Mr Shen said.

Reports have suggested that China is planning major military exercises near Taiwan, but President Clinton said yesterday he was confident that there would be no military conflict because too much was at stake.

Lawyer arrested in Bahrain crackdown

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE spectre of Islamic unrest spreading throughout the Gulf and threatening the conservative rulers of the oil-rich states was yesterday strengthened by a fresh attempt to crack down in the troubled island of Bahrain.

The Government has arrested a prominent lawyer and writer on the ground of inciting sabotage and arson, a move likely to inflame unrest in the small Gulf island. Ahmad al-Shamlan was arrested by security forces, who said that several suspects had disclosed under questioning that he had taken part in recent sabotage attacks and arson. He is the first prominent Sunni Muslim to be arrested since unrest at the end of 1994, largely inspired by Shia calls for an end to discrimination against the Shia majority and a restoration of the 1975 constitution.

The crackdown comes as Bahrain's neighbours are growing increasingly nervous about the demonstrations. Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent of Saudi Arabia, said in one of his first foreign policy announcements that the riots on the island were unacceptable and the instigators should be dealt with.

The six-member Gulf Cooperation Council, which groups Saudi Arabia and conservative states in the

Gulf, has blamed Iran for the unrest and accused it of stirring up anti-government violence.

Yesterday Bahrain, which has deported three dissident Muslim clergy it accused of pro-Iranian sedition, said Tehran had incited the protests. The security officials said Mr Shamlan had links and contacts with terrorist organisations abroad, and said that they would, when questioning ended, "provide full evidence supported by documents to the legal authorities".

Iran has conducted a virulent radio propaganda campaign against Saudi Arabia, which now sees Iran as the greatest threat to its security in the region. There is little evidence that Tehran has been actively conducting a campaign of subversion, although a diplomat was expelled from Bahrain last week.

There is mounting evidence that conservative Gulf rulers are taking fright at moves for more democracy and are putting pressure on neighbouring countries to clamp down on press and personal freedoms. Kuwaiti officials say they have been warned not to move any further in extending democratic rights because of the dangerous example this set.

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THE TIMES



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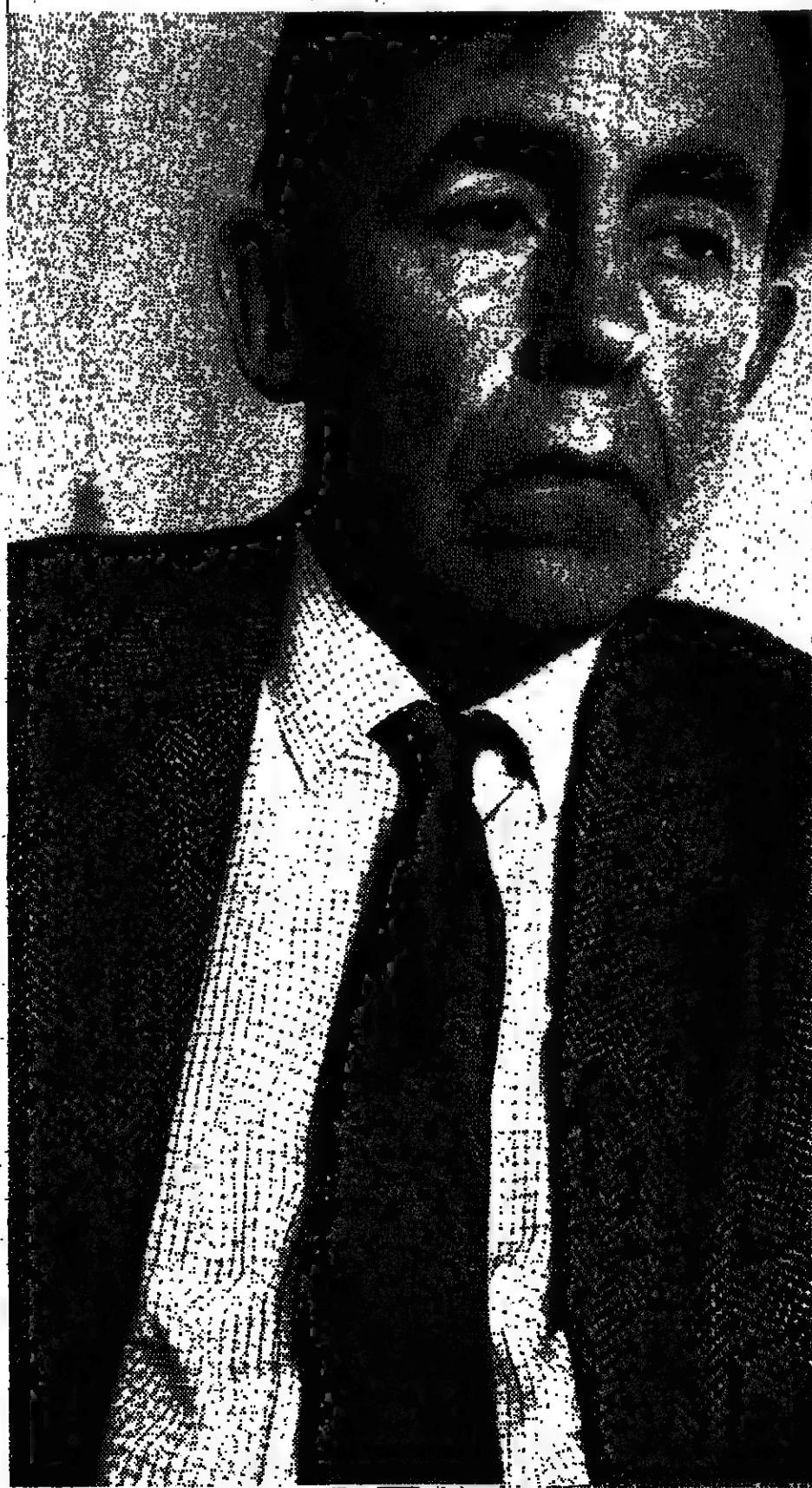
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Kohl calls for more sacrifices as jobless top four million

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

HELMUT KOHL, the German Chancellor, was attacked in parliament yesterday after the announcement that the number of unemployed had jumped well over the psychologically important level of four million and was worse than at any time since 1948.

The leap to 4.16 million was blamed partly on unusually cold weather, but the trend was unmistakable: it was the sixth monthly increase in a row. Despite a government action plan, worked out with the tentative agreement of the unions, the employment situation is unlikely to improve much this year.

This week Grundig, once a household name in electronics, announced the cutting of another 3,000 jobs, and Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister, unveiled plans to reduce 7,000 public-sector jobs, including a 20 per cent cut in the number of German spies.

The Chancellor told parliament that his plans to cut taxes and stimulate growth would eventually make an impact on unemployment levels, but that everybody had to be prepared to make sacrifices and contribute to reforms. He let out some of his old animosity for Baroness Thatcher as he defended his cuts in social spending. He was not, he said, about to destroy the welfare state. "We never thought the example of Thatcher was something suitable for German conditions."

Reprimand for Bonn

Bonn: A European Commission yesterday sharply criticised Bonn for its lagging implementation of European laws (Roger Boyes writes).

The reprimand by Mario Monti, the Commissioner responsible for the internal market, came as three German federal states looked set to face the European Court of Justice for banning the import of British beef.

Addressing an audience at Bonn University, he struck a raw nerve of the Government. "It is certainly not compatible with Germany's leading role in the process of European

BLEAK PROSPECT

□ Mechanical engineering: Production is up 7 per cent, but the number of jobs dropped by 10,000 in the past year.

□ Building: 5,500 bankruptcies were reported last year and more than 6,000 are expected this year. At least 90,000 jobs are expected to go this year.

□ Car industry: It is estimated that 100,000 jobs will be lost in manufacturing and the spare parts sector between now and 2000.

□ Electronics: The industry lost 230,000 jobs between 1990 and last year. More are expected to go this year. □ Retail trade: Between 30,000 and 40,000 jobs are to be cut this year. In the previous two years 90,000 jobs were lost.

We have completely different ideas of social obligations."

The unemployment figures were anticipated by the markets and the politicians, but they did nothing to dull the anger of debate or reduce the sense of hopelessness about the economic slowdown.

Last week the Chancellor brought together unions, employers and the Government to devise a package of incentives for businessmen, to map out welfare cuts and employ-

ment-creation measures in anticipation of the record unemployment level. Neither the Social Democrats, nor the leaders of the 16 federal state governments, nor the Bundestag were invited to the round table and all are unhappy.

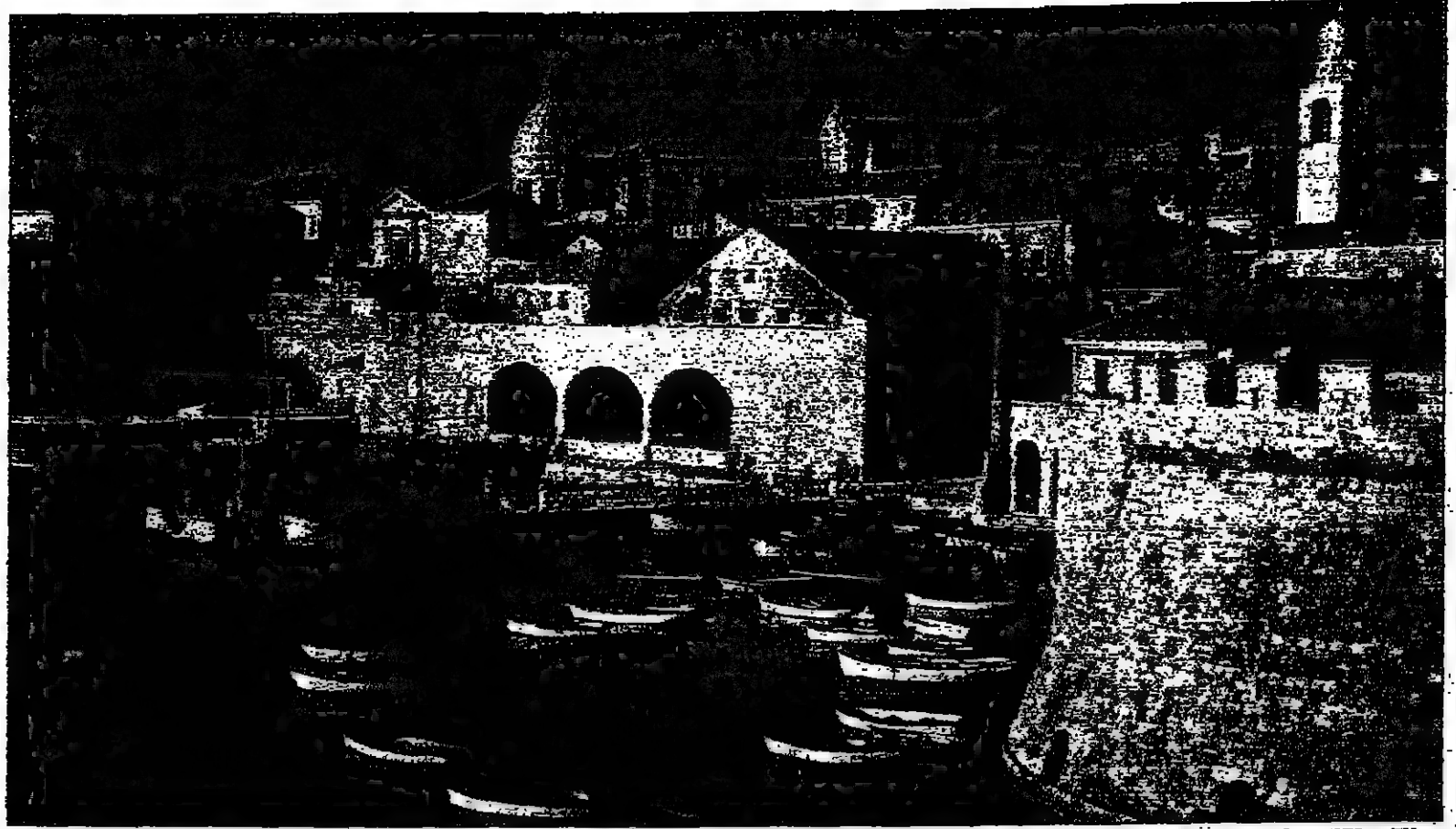
Bernhard Jagoda, head of the Federal Labour Office, said the unemployment rate had risen to 10.8 per cent from 9.9 per cent in December. The increase was more steep in eastern Germany — a 42,000 jump to 1.17 million — probably because of the large number of construction workers being laid off. In western Germany, where the worst affected areas were the Ruhr, Lower Saxony and Bremen, unemployment has risen to 2.67 million.

Heri Kohl has promised to create two million new jobs by 2000, but there is no sign that employers have been encouraged by his rather vague initiative.

First, there is a suspicion the Chancellor merely wants to ensure that the Social Democrats do not monopolise the employment issue. There are three regional elections next month, providing an important indicator to the Chancellor's future. Second, many employers believe that the unions are arguing on the basis of topsy-turvy economics. Union negotiators say that, since high labour costs are causing unemployment, then lower real wages should translate into new jobs.

Many employers claim it will be difficult to keep employment levels, even at their present level. David Herman, chairman of Opel, speaks for many employers when he says that unions will have to accept not only the principle of wage restraint but a lower standard of living across the board.

There is a basic resistance to big cuts in welfare spending. Rudolf Scharping, the Social Democrats' parliamentary leader, last night accused the Chancellor of deserting his responsibility to generate economic progress in a way that "intimately links it to social justice".



The harbour of Dubrovnik before it was attacked by the Yugoslav Army in 1991. The cost of restoring the city has been estimated at £178 million

Prince inspects restoration of battered Dubrovnik

FROM ALAN HAMILTON IN DUBROVNIK

THE Prince of Wales, champion of European architecture, yesterday inspected restoration work on one of the innocent victims of the Balkan war, the ancient walled city of Dubrovnik.

Wrapped in a heavy overcoat, the Prince saw how the so-called pearl of the Adriatic is slowly being pieced together again after fierce bombardment by the Yugoslav Army in 1991-92. The city, which welcomed 850,000 visitors in the year before the conflict, hopes that its shattered tourist business will soon be restored. The Prince

is the first member of the Royal Family to make an official visit to Croatia since it was recognised as an independent state by the European Union in January 1992. He was welcomed at the city's recently reopened airport by Zlatko Matasa, the Prime Minister.

Dubrovnik was first attacked, from the sea and from the mountains, by 15,000 soldiers of the Yugoslav Army, supported by Serbian and Montenegrin troops in September 1991. The worst day was in December of that year, when more than 1,000 shells fell on the city within 24 hours. Throughout the bombardment, it received more than 2,200 direct artillery hits.

The massive 15th-century city walls withstood the onslaught well, despite taking 147 hits, but 563 buildings were shelled within the city walls. 438 roofs were damaged, delicate stone carving was shattered by shrapnel, and nine buildings were destroyed. As the shells were falling, the Prince was addressing a meeting of the European Environmental Bureau in Brussels, appealing to the world not to stand idly by.

"We have no claim to regard ourselves as in any way more civilised in this day and age if we have to witness the dismemberment of a unique city like Dubrovnik," he said at the time.

Yesterday Nikola Obuljen, the Mayor, told the Prince that the cost of restoration had been estimated at \$274 million (£178 million) and the work would take 25 years. About \$30 million has so far been spent, mainly on emergency roof repairs. Among the casualties, which the Prince inspected, were a 15th-century fountain still displaying damage, the Franciscan monastery which took 37 hits, and the small baroque Festival Palace.

The Prince later flew to Split to meet British Army back-up units of the UN Implementation Force stationed at the Drivule barracks. He is due to meet other British units in Sarajevo today.

'Atrocity' crusade endangers Bosnia deal

FROM STACY SULLIVAN IN SARAJEVO

THE Bosnian peace process is in jeopardy due to the moral crusading of the war crimes tribunal and a potential breakdown of the Muslim-Croat Federation that is a cornerstone of the Dayton agreement, Nato officials said yesterday.

The military aspects of the Nato-enforced peace in Bosnia have taken hold with all sides withdrawing their forces from designated zones before scheduled deadlines. However, political issues on two fronts have endangered the process.

The thorniest issue is the prosecution of war criminals. International mediators have consistently insisted that bringing suspected war criminals to justice is essential to the peace process. But Nato officials, who have to walk a fine line between two former warring factions and who must negotiate with the Serbs, say hunting war criminals is harmful to the peace process.

"It is making things very difficult. Without diminishing the importance of the work of the war crimes tribunal, their moral crusade is premature because it is very damaging to the peace process," a Nato official said.

In a move that has outraged the Bosnian Serb leadership, Bosnian government police arrested 11 Bosnian Serbs and accused them of war crimes. The Serbs allegedly strayed into government territory. General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb military commander, has suspended contacts with the Implementation Force until the men are released.

At the same time Nato armed personnel carriers were deployed in Mostar to restrain a conflict between Muslims and Croats. Bosnian Croats occupied the European Union office on Wednesday, smashing windows in protest against plans to unify the town.

The flare-up threatens to undermine the coalition of Muslims and Croats brokered in 1994. The union is essential to preserving Bosnia as a single state.

Leading article, page 17

Land of machismo gets tough on rape

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

A NEW law redefining rape and introducing tougher penalties for sex offences, was passed yesterday by Italian parliament as a sign that entrenched male attitudes towards women are changing.

After 16 years of fruitless debate on sex crime legislation, women MPs forced through a Bill overturning a Mussolini-era law defining rape as "a crime against public morality". The Bill, which has yet to pass through the Senate, describes acts of sexual violence as crimes against the person, a much more serious charge. It also guarantees legal aid for rape victims and raises the minimum sentence for convicted rapists from three years to five. The maximum sentence remains ten years.

Controversially, the new law legalises sex between consenting minors aged between 13 and 16. An earlier version had proposed legalising sex from 12 years. Catholics are still troubled by the move, and one right-wing MP and lawyer, Raffaele della Valle, of Forza Italia, denounced the provision as a "teenage free love charter".

Alessandra Mussolini, the grand-daughter of the Duce and a prominent member of the "post-Fascist" Alleanza Nazionale, said the new law on rape was a victory for women. Maria Rita Parsi, a leading feminist and psychologist, said simply: "Italy has now joined the civil society."

Split widens in Spanish ranks over plan for single currency

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS AND EDWARD OWEN IN MADRID

EMERGING doubts in Spain over European monetary union have been given vivid voice with a scathing attack by Miguel Boyer, the former Socialist Finance Minister, who helped shape the single-currency project with Jacques Delors, the last European Commission President.

Señor Boyer, who was one of the committee of "wise men" who drafted plans for economic and monetary union (EMU) in the late 1980s, denounced what he called the "idiot of Maastricht" as a play, with potentially devastating consequences, which would mainly benefit Germany and France. "Never has so much damage been done to so many by so few fanatics," he said.

Although Señor Boyer left office in 1996 and is now financial director of a big construction firm, his European antecedents gave weight to his anti-EMU outburst.

delivered to 500 businessmen in Madrid. His attack follows signs of wavering commitment to EMU in the Socialist Party of Felipe Gonzalez, the Prime Minister, and business worries that Spain's weak economy may doom it to a second-class existence outside the EMU bloc.

Last month Carlos Westendorp, the Foreign Minister, spoke of a crisis of confidence in Europe and aired the possibility of a delay in the planned January 1999 launch. But Señor Gonzalez and José Maria Aznar, leader of the opposition Popular Party, are proclaiming strong commitment to EMU before next month's elections.

In Brussels and Bonn, the cracks appearing in Spain's hitherto seamless pro-European consensus are put down to fears of exclusion from the initial intake of EMU members in 1998. Spain now meets

none of the EMU criteria, although its debt ratio is close to the 60 per cent of gross domestic product prescribed in the Maastricht treaty. Its budget deficit, however, is still over double the 3 per cent of GDP required next year for entry.

Señor Boyer said "monetary union is more of a political than an economic objective. The very short calendar (to introduce the euro) could result in being so harmful that, by adhering to it, the very process of European union could be damaged."

Summing up, he said: "I do not share the dream of many technocrats and certain elite politicians of maintaining to the death a fiction about dates and conditions of convergence, hoping to catch nations by surprise with economic and monetary union, the significance and costs of which they do not know."

French mourn end of 2CV love affair

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

SHE was hardly a thing of beauty. She was unstable. She was slow. She was cheap. But, like all the best love stories, France did not know quite how much it loved the Citroën 2CV until she was gone.

Exactly five years after the last of these peculiar vehicles trudged off the factory floor and into myth, Jacques Wolgensinger, the former press officer at Citroën, has written a book looking back over a strange love affair between a country and a car.

Entitled *The 2CV: We Were So In Love*, M Wolgensinger's is the work of a man besotted and in mourning. The 2CV's designers, he recalls, had intended to create a car that could go the same speed as a horse, or at most twice as fast, that would be economical, reliable and unglamorous, but the vehicle was widely regarded as a joke when it was first unveiled. Thousands queued up to giggle at it.

Pierre Boulanger, the inventor, had decreed that the



The 2CV, considered a joke when unveiled in 1948

car should have a bouncy suspension that would enable it to carry eggs across rough terrain without scrambling them, while being mechanically simple enough for a peasant to mend.

A grey, ballous object, with a single headlight sticking out on a stalk and a water-thin body that defied alarmingly, the first 2CV, received an equivocal response when it was presented to dignitaries

and the public at the Paris motor show in 1948. "Merde alors, it is hideous," one witness remarked. The then President, Vincent Auriol, stared dubiously at the French car of the future and said "Humph" several times. But within a very few years the 2CV had ceased to be a mere farmer's tool and had become a cherished part of the French landscape, a cult symbol that everyone could

afford. The Thompson twins in the Tintin cartoon series drive a 2CV, while in the film *For Your Eyes Only* James Bond escapes in one. Brigitte Bardot drove a 2CV, and the transcontinental races involving the tough little car, which M Wolgensinger organised, increased its cachet.

M Wolgensinger reveals the 2CV in all its many shapes, colours and incarnations — converted into a boat, a bus, rolling along a highway and dangling from a building.

But new laws on safety and pollution spelled the end of the affair, and in the hard, fast world of car production the soft, slow, coughing 2CV could no longer keep up. The last one was made in 1990.

"Anyone who has driven a 2CV knows that it is both more and less than a car," M Wolgensinger writes. "This little motor is an expression of the soul. Along the thousand paths of the human memory, she is rolling still, unstoppable, into the eternity of remembrance and the glory of lost youth."

THE SUNDAY TIMES

WHY MAKING BABIES IS SO DIFFICULT



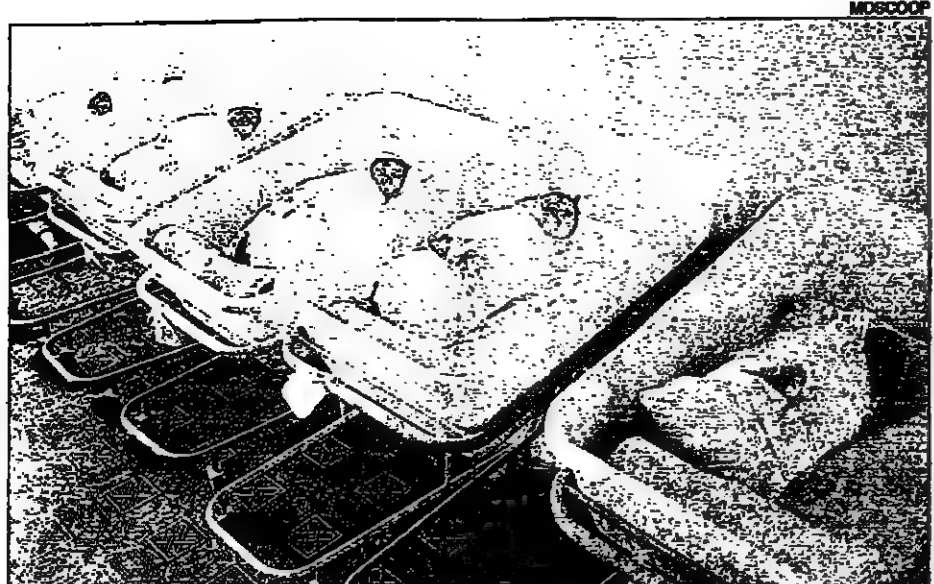
Evidence suggests that the human race is becoming infertile. This weekend The Sunday Times Magazine investigates a worrying global phenomenon as more and more couples resort to costly scientific treatments to have children

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THE SUNDAY TIMES / THE SUNDAY PAPERS

The stolen babies of Lvov



Doctors made newborn babies "disappear" by erasing all traces of their existence

Baby-smuggling is now big business in Ukraine. RICHARD BEESTON travelled there and met one of its tragic victims, brain-damaged Aleksandr Brooks, who was sent back by the Americans who adopted him

In a forgotten corner of a Ukrainian hospital ward Aleksandr Brooks looks out from his dirty cot on a grim world he will never comprehend. His blue eyes dart from side to side in steady rhythm, his hands twitch uncontrollably and his tiny voice emits a high-pitched squeak.

He has no toys, no visitors and only the bare green hospital walls for company. The overworked hospital staff are not even sure of his name, so he is routinely called the "American baby". They say he only seems happy when he sleeps.

Seeing him there is heart-wrenching; listening to the history of his short but eventful life is even more so. Since his birth three years ago in the western Ukrainian city of Lvov he has had two mothers and two fathers, has travelled to America and back and has had tens of thousands of dollars spent on him.

Tragically, for this tiny blond-haired child, the money and attention is the cause of his problems. Now brain-damaged and abandoned, he is destined to spend the rest of his years in the care of Ukraine's overstretched state institutions.

In a country crippled by poverty and post-indepen-

dence chaos, and still suffering the after-effects of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster a decade ago, the plight of one child does not rate high on the list of priorities.

But the story behind Aleksandr is ugly. It involves the local health inspector, explains: "A terrible crime was committed against the children of Lvov by the people entrusted with their care, and this child is their most tragic victim. I hope the people responsible will be punished."

Ever since he was tipped off

anonymously 18

months ago, Dr

Kolesnik has

worked doggedly

to expose a smug-

gling ring involv-

ing doctors, local

officials, and even

senior figures in

the Government in

Kiev.

In spite of at-

tempts to hush up

the scandal, which

even led to the

shooting two

months ago of the

chief criminal pro-

secutor on the case,

Igor Pylychuk,

the investigation

has now widened

across the country.

It is believed that

802 children may

have been illegally

sold abroad for

adoption.

Lvov, a beauti-

fully preserved me-

dieval city of

cobbled streets and

towering church

spires, has now

been exposed as

one of the most

active centres of

adoption racket. Here more

than 130 newborn babies have

been stolen either from their

mothers, or from the care of

the State, and sold to Ameri-

can, German and Italian cou-

ples for as much as \$40,000

each.

According to documents

now in the hands of investiga-

tors, the principal operators

were three doctors, now under

arrest and awaiting trial. They

preyed on destitute, alcoholic

and drug-addicted mothers,

persuading them to turn their

children over to the care of the

State, before falsifying their

documents and putting them

up for adoption. Many of the

women are too ashamed or

frightened to come forward.

But gradually their stories are

being told.

Aleksandr's case is typical of

how the operation worked.



As many as 800 babies may have been illegally sold abroad to American, German and Italian couples



Natasha Osipova wants her daughter back

illegal sale of babies by corrupt doctors and officials to the West, and the wholesale deception of their impoverished mothers, who were told that their newborns had died, or would have a better life being brought up by the State.

As Dr Vladimir Kolesnik, a

Born on a bitterly cold December day in 1992 to Hala Pup, an impoverished single mother, the premature, 3lb baby was exactly what the dealers were looking for.

It took Dr Vladimir Dorochenko, the head of the maternity centre, little effort to persuade the mother to sign away her parental rights and turn the tiny, ailing child over to his care. Once her consent was secured, the infant was removed from the intensive care unit and hidden in a flat belonging to a retired nurse.

With the child now out of sight, the birth certificate was backdated six months to facilitate adoption, and negotiations for the sale began with an American adoption agency. However, the deal was complicated on New Year's Eve when the child, deprived of the intensive care he needed, contracted meningitis and was taken to hospital with a critically high fever.

Although Aleksandr was now very sick and irreparably brain-damaged, the sale still went ahead. Complete with his new identity he was flown out of Ukraine for delivery to his new adoptive parents in Massachusetts.

The American couple, Peter and Katie Brooks, both lawyers, who operated through a licensed agency, were now landed with caring for a very sick baby. After three years of expensive medical costs in the US they

sent the child back. Contacted by phone in America, the adoptive father sounded very concerned about his son's tragic fate. But he remained guarded in his replies and refused to disclose any details of the adoption, in particular how much money was paid to the agency for Aleksandr.

When I told him of the appalling circumstances in which I found the three-year-old, he sounded genuinely upset. He confirmed that he and his wife, who had previously adopted an American baby, had taken the decision to return the child only after long

hook on the southern edge of Lvov, she was pressured again and again to sign her son over to the authorities.

"There was no room here at the time, so I reluctantly agreed," she said. "Later they told me he had died." In fact, her son is alive. Now called Brent Hanson, he is being raised by his adoptive parents on a sheep farm in Iowa.

Natasha Osipova never meant to give birth in Lvov. Journeying by train in December 1993, she went into labour and headed for the nearest

as Emilia Danzig of Cleveland, Ohio.

The scale of the baby-smuggling operation, and evidence that corrupt senior officials collaborated by signing adoption papers, initially shocked Ukraine, where Western couples are now banned from adopting children.

"Ukraine was thrown back into the Middle Ages when its neighbours took Ukrainian babies, as the Turks did to fill the ranks of their militia," said Yevhen Krasnyakov, a Communist deputy speaking at a

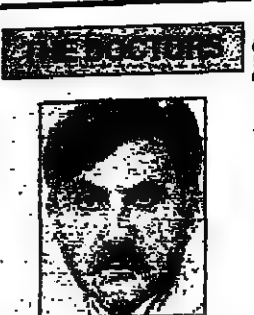
heated debate on the subject in the Ukrainian parliament earlier this year.

However, any hopes that the real culprits will be brought to trial or that the trade has finally stamped out raises only a cynical shrug from most of Lvov's long-suffering people, grown used to widespread government corruption and unchecked gangster rule. Part of the scepticism derives from the fact that there is no law against selling children, and the three doctors now under arrest are being investigated only for falsifying documents.

"We had eight prominent members of the city gunned down last year in gangster shootings and no one has been arrested," said Igor Pochenok, the editor of the weekly Express newspaper. "People here have become accustomed to the criminals getting away with their terrible crimes."

As for baby Aleksandr, he at least has one person who is still willing to stand up for his rights. "I am not speaking as a Ukrainian or a doctor, just as a human being," said Dr Kolesnik. "I am going to make sure that those responsible pay for their crime and that the American couple, while not criminally at fault, are made to realise they are morally guilty."

But as long as people continue to pay for children, there will always be a market for them.



Vladimir Dorochenko: As head of Lvov's main maternity centre he was known to a generation of mothers as a trusted and respected member of the city's medical profession. But after his arrest last year by police investigating the disappearance of newborn babies, he was identified as the ring-leader of a trade in children worth tens of thousands of pounds. He is suspected of falsifying the medical documents of 30 to 40 children who were then illegally sold to American couples for adoption.



Ludmilla Ornst: Expectant mothers due to give birth in the small regional hospital of Kanyanka-Buzia near Lvov always looked forward to a visit from Dr Ornst, the deputy head physician. A young mother of three with a kindly smile and sympathetic bedside manner, she lavished attention on the poorest girls. It was only when she was picked out in an identity parade by Natasha Osipova that her real identity was exposed. Far from being a dedicated doctor, she was a key figure in procuring babies from vulnerable women for the smuggling racket.



Olga Ushakova was told her son had died, but he is alive and living in Iowa

"They preyed on the destitute, persuading them to turn their children over before selling them abroad"



Lvov, centre of the babies-for-sale ring

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Below £5,000	1.00	0.75		

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£ 500+	2.65	1.99		
Below £500	1.00	0.75		

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£100+	1.25	1.09		
£ 50+	1.75	1.31		
Below £50	1.00	0.75		

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£ 25,000+	4.79	3.69		
£ 10,000+	4.41	3.31		
Below £10,000	2.62	1.97		

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THE THOROUGHbred BANK.

Why David Storey has decided he never wants to go back to the North again

AT THOROUGHLY masculine evening at David Storey's play *The Changing Room*, revived at the Duke of York's — naked men, most on the beefy side, with all their banting bravado — brings back memories of the days when playwrights arrived in London with attitude, gritty blokes from the grimy North.

David Storey came from Wakefield, an interesting combination of brown and brain: a rugby league player, son of a miner, who was also a painter, a student at the Slade. His novels were as successful as his plays: *This Sporting Life*, with Richard Harris, became one of those definitive Sixties films; and he won the Booker Prize in 1976 with the excellent *Saville*.

Don't he have a Brechtian reputation, being noted for biting a critic 20 years ago in the bar of the Royal Court? I remembered this as I watched this big, gentle, quietly-spoken, white-haired man in canvas shoes, in his kitchen with wallpaper from Woolworths, making me a cup of Gold Blend. He and his wife, married for 40 years, live in one of the meaner streets of Kenilworth, their house, now that the four children have departed, is the one with a fresh coat of paint.

Remind me, I said, about why you struck a critic. The play was called *Mothers Day*. The preview houses had been full. But he had a premonition that the first night would be a disaster, and it was. One of the actors "died". Michael Billington's notice in *The Guardian* began succinctly: "A stinker."

Not for the first time, a playwright was convinced that his play was killed off by critics. In the bar, where Storey was addressing the cast, he belaboured Billington about the head. "Poor old Michael," he laughs. "We've got on well, before and since."

"Playwrights do get above themselves. You're in a marketplace. If you don't sell the stuff on the stall, you've had it. Your whole bloody destiny is forged in the ridiculous ritual of one night. That's what makes playwrights so sensitive to criticism. It's a young person's racket."

In those days the Royal Court was constantly in ferment. "But it had a cohesive policy. Slightly didactic, but it was the only place you could put on innovative writing with any kind of impact. Now, there are half a dozen theatres doing that — but there's a scarcity of new writing."

Schooled at Wakefield Grammar himself, Storey sent all his children to state comprehensives, and kept them there even when others whisked their darlings away to independent havens. This is a pertinent tale, which the *Dumfries and Blairs* might heed, since at 62 he is exactly one generation older than they are.

At Hampstead Comprehensive he stood up at ETC meetings, full of indignant questions. Why had his eldest daughter, Helen, achieved one 'O' level after years of blithe reports from her teachers? Why had there never been any homework?

"Homework," he says, "was treated as almost a fascist suggestion. 'Some of our children' they told me, 'live 20 to a room, a complete lie with nowhere to do homework.' I said: 'Why not allocate them a classroom after school?' That would stigmatise them. I remember the headmaster saying, when I objected to the

deplorable teaching standards: 'Well, my principle is, as long as they're happy... That was the ethos of the time. In following the idea of equality, nothing was achieved.'

The head invited me to remove my children from the school. I said: 'I'm going to keep them there because I believe in comprehensive education.' Late one night I got a call from a teacher: 'I know you feel you're on your own, but there is a nucleus of older teachers who are completely behind what you're doing.'

"It was a three-year battle that I wouldn't want to go through again. But in the end all the changes I suggested — like homework, and proper marking — were formalised. And the school pulled round in one year: a 25 per cent improvement in exam results. Now one of my grandchildren is going to that school."

He knew what he was talking about because he had taught in 17 schools himself, including three officially designated the worst in the country, in Fellingdon and the East End. He describes classrooms where youths fought, wielding knives and upturned desks while a teacher sat slumped, having given up the struggle. "At least a third of the teachers should never have been allowed near a school. But teachers have been so devalued, the profession

is organic. I start off with a first line and hope something will happen." His plays always wrote themselves in a few days. *The Changing Room* took five.

He rarely goes to the theatre and meets no other playwrights. He likes the anonymity. Nor does he read newspapers or watch television. "Television has turned down all my work consistently for 37 years. They turned down *Home*, with Ralph Richardson and John Gielgud, directed by Lindsay Anderson. Eventually an American TV company filmed it, and the BBC bought it for two shillings."

His fatalistic, phlegmatic Yorkshire monotone remains, but having left Wakefield in 1953 he never goes back there if he can help it. Yorkshire bears no resemblance now to my memory; an imaginary Yorkshire which no longer exists. Five pits have disappeared, including the two my father worked in, and it's all been landscaped, you'd never know there'd been any collieries. I'm still engaged by the people, but there's no congruity between the present and the past. I was so longing to get away — I've never really lost that sense of glad relief at having escaped from it."

Yet having got off the train at King's Cross, where he and his wife Barbara lived in a room above a shop, "a true artist, starving for my vocation", and bought a white Jaguar for £7,500 with his first fiction prize — "drove it like a maniac and sold it for £10" — he has never left the borough of Camden.

Barbara works at the local Citizens Advice Bureau, where queues of refugees, "care in the community" patients, the disabled, the unemployed and the unemployable form daily. "All of them are desperate, a testimony to society. So many of their problems are utterly insoluble."

This house was to be a temporary base, but they have stayed nine years. In his first week here, he witnessed the first of several muggings; the police officer said: "You do realise you're living in a highly criminalised area, don't you?" Now he finds a poem springs unbidden from him every day. A volume of 200 poems is with his publishers now. "I'm sure they welcome it with all the excitement of a bill through the post."

He accepts no advances or deadlines. A lengthy new novel is almost ready. Also a philosophical work about the structure of the psyche, based on his own experience. Not that he ever had a clinical nervous breakdown; he just felt, he says quite equably, "anxiety about the normal vacillations of life."



Memories are made of this... David Storey on the set of *The Changing Room*, which is being revived at the Duke of York's after 25 years

Enter the organic carnivore

IF organic food was once the butt of gibes about beards, lentils and people employed to stick mud on to potatoes, three things have happened in recent years to make "organic" the designer label. Genetic engineers have created fruit and vegetables that look and taste like hal decorations. Television exposes have shown the horrors of modern husbandry — and BSE has made us potential co-victims of those horrors. An organic boom has resulted and Britain now has its first organic supermarket, west London's highly funky Planet Organic, where beef sales have risen 30 per cent since the BSE scare. Meat was once an expensive treat, but cheap meal became a daily requirement and standards fell to provide it; now we eat not only poor meat, but too much of it. Punters at Planet Organic have rediscovered a lost tradition: instead of a £1.50 frozen chicken every day, they buy an occasional £8 organic free-range bird, which tastes like chicken used to and cannot be carved with a spoon.

Instead of a steak for £1.30 that has been subjected to BSE-friendly conditions, they buy a less frequent £3.50 steak, which tastes infinitely better. A side effect, of course, of this quality-quantity trade-off will be less heart disease. Will it catch on? In my local Waitrose last night the free-range chickens were sold out, while rows of merely "fresh" fowl — pallid and swollen-breasted — were undisturbed. The New Carnivore is at large, moved by respect not for poultry, but for himself.

SIGN OF THE TIMES
by Giles Coren

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THREE COUNTRYMEN

Rural landscape has changed more than the political

It is as often a cause for alarm as celebration when the country's leaders all agree. Policies as unhappy as appeasement and the ERM have enjoyed a cross-party consensus in the past. But some worthy causes have also secured all-party backing. Sixty-seven years ago *The Times* was happy to publish a letter signed by the leaders of Parliament's three biggest parties pledging to preserve the best of rural England. Today we are pleased to reprint the same sentiments endorsed by the three men who lead the same parties. If only the countryside were as unchanging as the politicians' pieties.

John Major, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown repeat, almost verbatim, the hopes outlined by their predecessors. Stanley Baldwin, Ramsay MacDonald and David Lloyd George, in 1929, on the eve of another famous election when Labour was looking to make an historic breakthrough. It is perhaps unsurprising that the current leaders feel able to echo so exactly the call for sensitive development and thoughtful conservation of another generation for they are, so strikingly, the heirs of Baldwin, MacDonald and Lloyd George.

Mr Major, like Baldwin, an unshowy representative of Middle England who has coped stoically with royal scandal, and appealed lyrically to our nostalgic sense of nation, substituting warm beer and old maids for ploughmen and scythes. Mr Blair, like MacDonald, is a rightwinger with a cautious Shadow Chancellor; Mr Blair, like MacDonald, seems happier in Establishment salons than in his own party. Mr Ashdown, like Lloyd George, combines grand rhetoric with a taste for the flashy and a special sympathy for the female sex.

Yet while these aspects of the political landscape seem surprisingly little changed, the shape of our countryside has been dramatically altered since 1929. The auto-

mobile's appetite for land, the mechanisation of farming and the twisted priorities of the common agricultural policy have combined to drive the England of Baldwin's boyhood to the margins of our memories. Village life, its rhythm surprisingly constant from the Anglo-Saxons to The Archers, has never been more changed: small shops are displaced by supermarkets, property prices are driven up by city refugees and public transport worsens.

Steps have been taken by the party leaders to enact policies in line with the principles to which they put their names. Last October the Environment Secretary, John Gummer, published a thoughtful White Paper on the Countryside which promised steps to safeguard village life: he has also worked hard to conserve rare species. The abandonment of many road-building schemes announced last November should also be applauded. It may be more a matter of conserving taxpayers' money than the land but it is welcome nevertheless. The main Opposition parties have been constructive critics of the roads programme. It is a pity a good case has so often been spoilt by the antics of protesters whose lifestyles mock the traditional virtues of the countryside they claim to protect.

Aside from sustaining sensitive development there is one other service that politicians could do rural people if they sincerely wish to see "the protection of our countryside in its rich personality and character". The modish metropolitan enthusiasm for a ban on fox hunting should be opposed. A recreation enjoyed by country folk of every class, as much part of the personality of rural England as its hedgerows and Norman churches, it is a liberty worth defending. The English character may be suburban but its roots are rural. Those roots require nurturing, not just casual neglect and the occasional agreement to agree.

THE MOSTAR TEST

If Mostar becomes a Balkan Berlin, all bets for peace are off

Nato has made commendable headway in implementing the military provisions of the Dayton agreement on Bosnia. Armies have been separated more or less on schedule. The task of marking out internal boundaries, has fallen behind, but that is because of heavy snow, uncharted minefields and problems created where the lines on the Dayton maps saw through schools and houses. In most areas, the spirit of the agreement is being observed. The bitter disputes over the future of Mostar and Sarajevo, which we report on page 12, are exceptions: but they are very important exceptions.

If these two cities become Balkan Berlins, permanently divided, all bets are off for lasting peace in Bosnia. Sarajevo's reunification is the prime symbol and test of the readiness of Bosnia's separate Serb and Muslim-Croat "entities" to coexist in a federal Bosnian Republic. It is also the necessary condition for setting up Bosnia's collective presidency, parliament and supreme court. Mostar is equally critical, for different reasons. If the city remains divided between Croats and Muslims, the Muslim-Croat Federation will collapse and with it, the entire Dayton plan. Because the federation's Muslim and Croat cantons form a patchwork that could not physically be separated were Bosnia to split in three, the federation's collapse would mean war.

The reintegration of both cities is at a standstill. In Sarajevo yesterday the Bosnian Serbs, who had already suspended all political contact with the Bosnian Government, announced that they will no longer talk to the Nato-led Implementation Force (Ifor).

The reason they give is the Bosnian Government's detention of Bosnian Serb officers, whom it accuses of war crimes. These cases are now being investigated by the Hague war crimes tribunal and unless Mr Justice Goldstone finds grounds to indict them, the men must be released. But this is almost certainly just a pretext. The Serbs have been looking for an excuse to avoid handing the Serb-held suburbs of Sarajevo

to Bosnian Government control by March 19, as required by Dayton. They are out to hang onto them at least until after the Bosnian elections due later this year.

That cannot be countenanced. But the Americans must also increase pressure on the Bosnian Government, which is in retreat from the multicultural goals which won it so much international support. It has done too little to convince the Serbs and Croats who make up a fifth of Government-held Sarajevo that they will have a fair share of political power, let alone to reassure the inhabitants of the Serb-held suburbs that they will be safe in a united city.

The ultranationalist Croats of Mostar can claim no excuse for this week's violence against Hans Koschnick, the European Union's capable administrator for the city, or for breaking into the EU's Mostar headquarters. The fault lies entirely with the Croats. Mostar's 55,000 Muslims suffered terribly at the hands of Croat forces, who fought for a year to establish Mostar as the capital of an independent Croatian state of Herzeg-Bosnia. Yet they strongly support a reunited city. Herr Koschnick has produced an administrative plan, as envisaged by Dayton, which is fair and sensible. The Croats moreover asked Herr Koschnick to mediate a fortnight ago and promised to abide by his verdict. But now, urged on by Croat gang-leaders who make fortunes out of partition, the mayor of the Croat part of the city has reverted to the demand that Mostar be "the Croat capital".

Croatia, which supports Mostar's Croats while claiming that it cannot control them, has the power to stop them and must be made to do so. Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, is right to hold President Tudjman to account. In Zagreb on Tuesday, he should be blunt that there will be no more assistance to Croatia until it curbs gangster politics in Mostar. Money has begun to talk as loudly as gunfire in the Balkans. In this most difficult of peacemaking tasks, that must be accounted progress.

A CUE MISSED

There is more to snooker than balls

We have long known that snooker players were potters of ball. Now we can confirm that they are potters of cue too. The primitive wooden implement by which balls are propelled, into pockets as deep as a schoolboy's, is for many players more than just a tool of the trade. For this guild, the cue is a thing of mystique and reverence — or if a piece of wood could ever be described in this mixed-metaphor manner — a security blanket of blissful warmth.

On our sports pages today, we carry a report on how much their own cues mean to Britain's snooker players. The most famous of them all is Steve Davis, and his has also been the most famous broken cue in history. Snap, it went one day, by accident, and snap went his snooker form too. The man who has potted more titles than other, less-fortunate members of the fraternity of misspent youth (more titles, in fact, than any member of history) has won not a single tournament for more than 12 months now. A tragic snap: clearly, also, an expensive one.

What puzzles observers, and rightly, is why such great store is set by so simple an object. Is a snooker cue a work of complex craftsmanship, as a cricket bat is, or a hyper-modern fibreglass tennis racket? Evidently

not. Do cues come in a perplexing variety of shapes, sizes, finishes, sheens and weights? No, again. So what, dear Davis, is all the fuss about?

Our out-of-form ex-whiz is not alone. Cue-potters (with or without anoraks) will remember the case of Stephen Hendry: for the sake of a lost cue that cost less than your humblest electric kettle (£20, if you must know), he offered an impassioned reward of £10,000. Mathematical readers of *The Times* will work out quickly that Hendry could have bought himself 500 cues for the sum put up for his pet cue's restitution.

There are other cue stories... too many, in fact, to be told at once in this column. What is clear, however, is that snooker is played as much in the mind as it is with a cue. Snooker, as a game, makes fewer technical demands on a player than many others. Of course a snooker player needs not to be colour-blind. But more than sumptuous skills, he needs a still head, still feet and sang froid — *yes, très froid*. Snooker is a mind game and a lost cue, or one cruelly snapped, can sap morale in a way that those of us who do not play snooker will never understand. Or perhaps we understand only too well: and leave the game firmly alone.

Party unity on the countryside

From the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Party

Sir, In 1929, at the inception of the Council for the Protection of Rural England's appeal for public support, our forebears, Stanley Baldwin, J. Ramsay MacDonald and David Lloyd George, pledged their support for the English countryside in a letter to *The Times*. In the year of CPRE's seventieth anniversary, we are pleased to make that commitment again.

During the next few months we shall differ on so many problems of public importance that we gladly take the opportunity of showing that on one subject we speak with a united voice — namely, in advocating the protection of our countryside in its rich personality and character.

We do this in the full confidence that necessary development can and should be directed with thoughtful and scrupulous attention to the charm of our countryside. Much of its beauty is the direct result of man's activities in the past and in these days when the objectives of planning and land management and the appreciation of landscape are more widely shared than ever before, we ought to be able to make necessary changes in ways that avoid injuring our precious heritage.

We are, Sir, your obedient servants,
JOHN MAJOR,
TONY BLAIR,
PADDY ASHDOWN.
As from the Council for the Protection of Rural England,
Warwick House,
25 Buckingham Palace Road, SW1,
February 8.

Role of civil servants

From Mr Hugh Colver

Sir, Mr M. G. Power's suggestions (letter, February 5) that Mr Michael Heseltine was wrong to ask civil servants to explain policy, and that anonymity is a virtue for civil servants, should not go unchallenged. It has long been the duty of the Government Information Service, in which I was privileged to serve for 17 years, to explain what they do.

Of course it is the job of ministers to explain and advocate their policies and to demonstrate how those policies relate to a particular party political philosophy. Indeed this Government has suffered politically because ministers have not sought to gain maximum political advantage from their activities.

However, it is nonsense to suggest that civil servants can never engage in dialogue about policy because any public antagonism of a policy that may be antithetical to an opposition political party would make it difficult to serve a government of a different persuasion.

As a head of information in a government department it is one's duty to serve ministers and to further the policies and objectives of the Government, even if those policies are surrounded by considerable political controversy. Of course, in so doing one is furthering the objectives of the political party in office — but that is perfectly proper. It is one of the benefits of political office.

In my experience ministers are very aware that they must not involve civil servants in any party political activity and government information officers are careful not to be dragged into party politics by so fierce an advocacy that misinterpretation is possible. This is sometimes a difficult line to draw, but ministers and government information officers are drawing it with great care and comparative ease every day.

Of one thing we can be sure. Any future Labour government would expect to gain maximum advantage from the trappings of political office and would not understand a Civil Service — and particularly a government information service — that did not see it as its job to explain and promote government policy. Especially in the run-up to a general election, the Deputy Prime Minister was quite right to remind the Civil Service of its duty.

Yours sincerely,
HUGH COLVER
(Chief of Public Relations, Ministry of Defence, 1987-92; Director of Communications, Conservative Central Office, 1995),
1 St Austell Road, SE13,
February 6.

Floral tributes

From Mr Martin Horwood

Sir, I wonder how much unhappiness the bleak instruction, "No flowers, please", to be found in the Deaths columns, causes to friends and acquaintances (letters, February 1, 8).

Flowers are the one personal contribution that we can make to an otherwise formal, ritualised business. The cards accompanying them provide joy and solace to the bereaved family, the flowers themselves colour and celebration to the service, a lasting memory and some feeling of participation to those who attend. The next instruction might be, "No tears, please".

I hope steps will be taken on Anglesey to protect the rest of the wildlife. Yours faithfully,
J. R. GREEN,
Red Hall Villa,
Haughon-le-Skerne,
Carnington, Co Durham.
From Mr Andrew Harris
Sir, Surely the only justification for killing grey squirrels so as to encourage red ones is because we find the latter more attractive to look at. I know

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Why heredity serves a useful purpose in the Lords

From Sir John Stokes

Sir, Mr Blair's intemperate attack on the hereditary peers (reports and leading article, February 9) shows that he has no sense of history and no realisation that the House of Lords is the most efficient and respected second chamber in the world. Under Mr Blair's rule the age of chivalry would certainly be gone, to be succeeded by the age of the common man with a vengeance, with the powerful trade unions waiting in the wings.

I do not believe that this French-style revolutionary policy is what most British people want, who respect the hereditary peers and admire their patriotism and good manners. A peer nominated, part-elected second chamber would be a recipe for disaster. As Lord Falkland said in 1641, if it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN STOKES,
(Conservative MP for Oldbury and Halesowen, 1970-74, and Halesowen and Stourbridge, 1974-92),
4 The Bradburys, Stratton Audley,
Nr Bicester, Oxfordshire.

From Mr Peter Le Cheminant

Sir, The principle of replacing the hereditary House of Lords by an elected second chamber was clearly established by the Parliament Act of 1911. That Act expressed sorrow that "such substitution cannot be immediately brought into operation".

In the light of the ensuing 84 years' delay in carrying out the then Parliament's good intentions the worldly

wise will assume that the House of Commons is reluctant to share its untrammelled power with anyone. In this matter at least MPs will echo (and I suspect will go on echoing) St Augustine's prayer "Lord make me chaste, but not yet".

Yours etc,
PETER LE CHEMINANT,
23 Weyles Avenue,
Burgham, Guildford, Surrey,
February 8.

From Mr Norman Chang

Sir, With an elected House of Commons, one is never quite sure as to whether or not MPs, when casting votes or when offering a Private Member's Bill for reading, are attempting to further their political careers or are conscious of possible deselection when their five-year fixed tenure expires at a general election.

Hereditary peers, on the other hand, invite no such suspicion of motive. They have a life tenure and thus tend to be driven by principle and duty rather than political ambition.

Yours faithfully,
NORMAN CHANG,
11 Cragland Road, NW1.

From Mr Ian Mann

Sir, Tony Blair may view the House of Lords as the ascendancy of heredity over democracy but this is to misinterpret its true value.

The overwhelming advantage of the hereditary peers is their initial self-selection by birth, that involuntary act of fate that comes to us all. The overwhelming disadvantage of the House

of Commons is their initial self-selection by ego, that involuntary act of fate that comes to all politicians.

As a consequence of this the House of Commons may represent the people but, paradoxically, it is the House of Lords that is representative of the people.

Yours faithfully,
IAN MANN,
55a Redcliffe Square, SW10,
February 8.

From Lord Denham

Sir, You report Mr Tony Blair as asserting that the poll tax, "the most expensive fiasco in fiscal history", would never have become law without the hereditary peers.

Under the Salisbury/Addison convention, agreed by all parties at the time of the Atlee government, the House of Lords does not reject at second reading a Bill that has been in the governing party's manifesto. This has since been extended to cover a genuine wrecking amendment, one which would have the effect of killing such a Bill without further discussion being possible. And this is what the amendment to clause 1 of the Local Government Finance Bill undoubtedly would have done.

It was this factor, even more than the strength of the whip that I sent out, that accounted for the size of the Tory vote on that occasion in 1988.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
DENHAM
(Conservative Whip, 1979-91),
House of Lords,
February 8.

Germany's views on the nation state

From the Duke of Devonshire

Sir, I write to express my alarm at the reaction in some quarters to Chancellor Kohl's Leuven speech (report, February 3; letters, February 7). It would appear that the Chancellor is telling the world that, in spite of all he and his predecessors have said, his country has not changed its spots.

He implied that if Germany did not get its way over monetary, followed by political union in Europe there might be a return to force of arms — perhaps resulting in a future British Prime Minister bleating over the airwaves about some "far-away country of which we know little".

In spite of being defeated in two wars this century, modern Germany seems determined to hold sway over Europe, with a threat of aggression if it fails. Ever-closer European integration threatens the nation state — the natural state of affairs for a country.

The time has come for us to stand up for the individual rights of the countries within the European Community. The strenuous voices of those who might say that in the interests of peace Germany's views must be accepted to must be resisted.

Yours faithfully,
DEVONSHIRE,
Chatsworth, Bakewell, Derbyshire,
February 7.

Beating the weather

From Mr William J. Jory

Sir, Dr Stuttaford ("Medical briefing", February 7) rightly reminds drivers stuck in deep snow to wear adequate clothing and avoid alcohol, but it is worth re-emphasising his point about the need to keep the vehicle's airway clear so that exhaust fumes can be dispersed.

As a visiting eye surgeon in northern Canada for many years, I was advised by long-distance truck drivers not to run the engine, since you may not realise if your exhaust becomes blocked by snow, which could lead to fatal carbon monoxide poisoning.

Better to carry a large candle (and matches). The lighting of candles gives off a surprising amount of heat and uses up a negligible amount of oxygen, provides a welcome boost to morale and enables would-be rescuers to find you. Sandbags, if possible over the driving wheels, can assist traction.

One hopes your readers will not require the last piece of equipment. This is a good length of rope carried next to the driver to throw out of the window if one is caught in an avalanche. The

rope tends to snake to the surface of the snow, making detection and subsequent rescue easier.

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM JORY
(Consultant eye surgeon),
21B Devonshire Place, W1.

From Dr J. A. Collings-Wells

Sir, Dr Stuttaford recommends sacks be placed under the driving wheels of cars stuck in snow. Nearly 60 years ago my father taught me a far more effective method, learnt from his days on the mud roads of East Africa before the First World War.

Two lengths of chicken wire, each 3ft long by 1ft wide, placed under the driving wheels, provide a much better grip and work equally well in mud or snow.

This simple device has got me out of trouble on very many occasions. In the sort of weather we are experiencing at the moment it can mean the difference between getting home or spending a night out.

Yours truly,
JOHN COLLINGS-WELLS,
Rivercroft, Undershore Road,
Lymington, Hampshire,
February 7.

A squirrel warning

From Mrs J. R. Green

Sir, The plan to distribute poisoned bait to grey squirrels in an attempt to preserve red squirrels (report and photograph, February 6) must alarm anyone who has watched what they can do with a bulk supply. For every item eaten, two or three may be buried. In our garden pigeons and this retrieve them as soon as the squirrel moves off. Squirrels will bury nuts even when cats are around.

I hope steps will be taken on Anglesey to protect the rest of the wildlife. Yours faithfully,
J. R. GREEN,
Red Hall Villa,
Haughon-le-Skerne,
Carnington, Co Durham.

the grey squirrel is "alien", but I can't think of any reason why this should make us poison them. In any case, it would be impossible to exterminate them in this country — they are far too well established.

Environmentalists will no doubt counter it is a worthwhile exercise in its own right to preserve a species endangered in some parts of Britain; but why? Species have always come and gone, and man is powerless to intervene, except at the edges.

Yours sincerely,
A. D. HARRIS,
10 Evertons Close,
Droitwich, Worcester.

Business letters, page 25

Sports letters, page 35

Letters for publication may be forwarded to: 0171 703 7244

Millennium events

From Mrs Penelope Lively

Sir, While welcoming the principle that the book is an appropriate subject for celebration at the millennium (Simon Jenkins, January 27; letter, February 6), I would suggest that the proper medium is the British Library — the national archive.

The new building at St Pancras has had its problems but these are now largely overcome, and after its opening from 1997, it will be the natural focus for any such millennial celebration of the printed word.

I write as Chairman of the British Library's Centre for the Book, which exists to promote the significance of the book in all its forms.

Yours sincerely,
PENELOPE LIVELY,
55 Gibson Square, NI,
February 6.

Pole position

From Mr Alan Smith

Sir, The repositioning of the South Pole by 18in poses no serious threat to past explorers' claims to have reached it. Your report "Satellite technology moves South Pole to its true (sic) position" (February 6) also states that the technology used is only accurate to one yard. This would suggest that the old position and the new position are in fact the same place within this tolerance.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN SMITH,
35 Lansdown Road, Mitcham, Surrey,
February 8.

S for serendipity

From Mr Hugh Douglas

Sir, Serendipity of the type Mrs Anne Taylor encountered in *The Complete Guide to What's on Talking Tapes* (letter, February 6) is enjoyed by all of us who research in libraries.

My favourite, in 30 years of research, was in Mr Palmer's estimable index to your own newspaper published in the years before 1906. A report of a railway accident at Nottingham sometime during the last century was listed, not under R, A, or even N, but under H.

The headline of the story read "Horrible rail crash at Nottingham". It compensated for a week's frustrating failure to find the reference I was seeking.

Yours faithfully,
HUGH DOUGLAS,
146 Broadway,
Peterborough, Cambridgeshire,
February 7.

From Mr Daniel Lyon

Sir, Anne Taylor's index difficulties are not a new phenomenon. Thirty years ago the council I then worked for had great difficulty in showing title to a piece of land in Blackpool Road, Preston, which it had bought some eighty years before. The massive hand-written property register appeared to show no trace of the deeds, despite what I thought had been an exhaustive search.

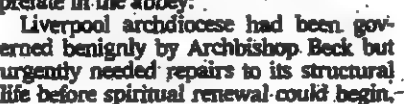
However, they were found instantly by my successor, whose thought processes more closely matched those of the Victorian filing clerk: I had naively searched under "B" for Blackpool Road, but he went straight to "P" for Piece of Land.

Yours faithfully,
DAN LYON
(Director of Administration),
Test Valley Borough Council,
Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road,
Andover, Hampshire.

THE MOST REV DEREK WORLOCK

He was made a monsignor at 29, a very early age, and served to the end of

His years at Portsmouth were successful locally, with unprecedented ecumenical co-operation and the projection of an image for the Roman Catholic Church in local political and civic affairs that was



The Liverpool congress was something of a triumph for the city's archbishop. He

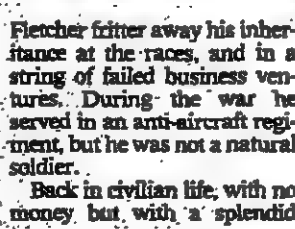
His service to Liverpool in other ways was immense. At the time of the Toxteth riots Worlock made it his business, sometimes with David Sheppard and sometimes alone, to intercede with the police and with the black community. It was in the course of observing their conflict on the street first-hand that he was

The occasion, and his words of comfort, so widely broadcast, seemed to bring the vision of God's mercy to the city's needs. What he conveyed was his total participation in the suffering, which he deeply felt. The last barrier between the city, intellectual middle-class southerner and this tough northern working-class city had come down. For all his other efforts for Merseyside, struggling to revive its economy, pushing the idea of the free port, opposing factory closures, interceding with ministers over the chaotic local government situation, he was never more truly Liverpool's Archbishop than in this moment of crisis. In the days of gratitude after Hillsborough, although it came some years later, his highly unusual appointment, for a Catholic prelate, as a Companion of Honour in the New Year Honours of last December reflected in part the gratitude of the political world for the work he did at that time.

Worlock published a number of books, all except *Better Together* (1988), written with David Sheppard, devotional in tone. He edited two anthologies, *Take One at Bedtime* (1962) and *Turn and Turn Again* (1971). Each revealed him as a man not only of wide reading but as someone who himself possessed the ability to say profound things simply.

**LIEUTENANT-COLONEL
BRIAN MADDEN**

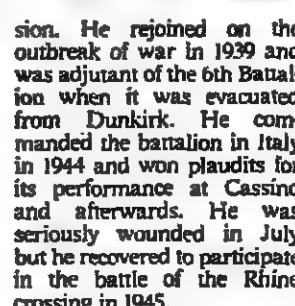
The son of a chartered accountant, Ronald Fletcher inherited wealth from his grandfather who owned coalmines in the North of England. After schooldays at Shrewsbury, he read English at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. But he devoted more attention to the racetrack than to the iambic pentameter, and was sent down. The 1930s saw



Fletcher was invited to read the endpieces to the shows. And while he could hardly be said to be a comedian in his own right — his announcements were written for him —

read the newspaper clippings, but because of an administrative error it was Cyril Fletcher who was approached about the job and who went on to make a long career on *This Life*.

Brian John George Maddox was educated at Wellington from where he went to Sandhurst in 1927. His father had died of wounds sustained in 1915 while commanding the 1st Battalion The Irish Guards, and he spent much of his youth with his mother and family, the Macphersons of Ballindalloch. Here he learnt of his ancestor William Grant, who in 1721 had raised one of the independent companies from which The Black Watch was formed in 1739; he was commissioned into the regiment in 1928. Sent to India with the 1st Battalion, he contracted tropical disease and, judged medically unfit to serve overseas, he resigned his commission.



He was a man of great humanity. He had no truck with those who counted the "bag" of the enemy dead like so many brace of grouse. He felt as much compassion for their wives and mothers as for the families of British casualties. He spared no effort to win in battle, but he was determined that war should not coarsen those who had to wage it. His own lifestyle verged on the austere; but though he himself had no taste for rumbustious and rude relaxation, he never berated others for their fun.

In 1948 he became assistant superintendent of the Middlesex Hospital, and later secretary of the St Helier group of hospitals. He retired in 1974 and was then a governor of the Royal Star and Garter Home until 1984. In 1969 he had married an army widow, Mary Cummings. She died in 1989 and he is survived by a nephew and two stepchildren.

PERSONAL COLUMN

[illegible]

ON THIS DAY

February 9, 1872

With some occasional flippancy the writer describes a scene which is still part of the pageant of Parliament.

air which ascends to the Houses is filtered and regulated, and warmed and moistened, and otherwise made fit for legislators to breathe. Thermometers, anemometers, gauges, jets, whirligigs, and other contrivances are everywhere; but there is plenty of room to spare for a Gay Hawkins, for we walk through corridors after corridors clean and empty. The Marshmallows and Breefeaters, as in duty bound, take it all *au sérieux*, and peer into air chambers and recesses as though they really expected to find at least a can of nitroglycerine. Down another ladder they descend to another ventilating chamber, into which air rushes through strained canvas, which re-

cludes the smuts. The vaults are, as it were, in three decks, and a third steep iron ladder leads to the lowest Avenues, a descent not very easy. It would be odd indeed if the searchers lit upon so much as a conspiring rat, for the whole place has been lighted up beforehand, in order that the Beefeaters and their tail may know where to step. There are lower depths and darker corners, side cellars, and shut passages into which they do not look; and what may lurk there no one knows. In fact the rule seems to be on no account to search any spot which might really hold a live conspirator.

This Search—It dates, we believe, from the time of Titus Oates—is purely a custom, for we are told that it is not, as taxpayers might apprehend, bolstered up by any laws to those concerned. It is a great, or rather a little, piece of nonsense; but there is, nevertheless, the extent of the necessity of due and seasonable attention to the cellars. The explanation is, of course, as simple as it is stupid, and we state a fact which, we believe, has never before been made public, when we say that in the Charist days of 1848 the Home Office received information of a regularly planned Guy Fawkes plot. A sewer was to be entered from the river, powder was to be placed in the drain already referred to as running directly under the Treasury, and the British Constitution was to be blown into the air.

NEWS

Public pay freeze hits nurses

■ The Government angered public-sector workers by restricting nurses to a national pay award of 2 per cent and cutting back awards to a million others.

Britain's 480,000 nurses were told they would have to rely on local bargaining to secure more than 2 per cent. The Government added to their anger by declining to follow last year's practice of setting a target that nurses should be able to win from hospitals. **Pages 1, 8**

Party leaders go to the country

■ The leaders of the main parties have jointly written to *The Times* to express support for the protection of the countryside. John Major, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown, echo the language of a similar letter on May 8, 1929, signed by Stanley Baldwin, Ramsay MacDonald and Lloyd George. **Pages 1, 17**

Hindley plea

Myra Hindley, the Moors Murderer, should be considered for transfer to an open prison after serving 30 years in a succession of high and medium security jails, says the Parole Board. **Page 1**

Dearer prescriptions

Prescription charges are to rise by 25p to £5.50p from April, an increase of nearly 5 per cent, the Government announced. **Page 1**

Benefits storm

A political storm erupted over Government plans to cut social security running costs by 25 per cent, with predictions that up to 20,000 jobs would go. **Page 2**

Actress's triumph

Josie Lawrence, the comedian who began her career in working-men's clubs, has won an award for her Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*. **Page 3**

\$1,000,000 question

Joan Collins took a verbal mauling in the witness stand in a \$4 million breach of contract case with her former publisher. Earlier, she confessed that she had spent the \$1.2 million advance that is at the root of the dispute. **Page 3**

Canoe man freed

The managing director of an activities centre, jailed for the manslaughter of the four young victims of the Lyme Bay canoeing disaster, is to be freed. **Page 5**

Tory hopeful takes to the air

■ Young Tory bloods will stop at nothing to win the chance of a Commons seat. But few spend £1,000 to hire a helicopter to beat the driving snow and appear before two selection meetings during the same evening. John Bercow, special adviser to Virginia Bottomley, did that when he was invited to meetings at Surrey Heath, and Buckingham. **Page 1**

Media group

Two peers from opposites sides of the political spectrum announced a merger that will create one of Britain's most powerful media conglomerates. **Page 6**

Euro award

A republican activist, who was jailed for eight years for his part in helping to falsely imprison an RUC informer, was awarded £15,000 costs by European Union human rights judges. **Page 9**

Calmer waters

The Pope's Latin American tour is helping to erase ugly memories of his first visit to the region in 1983, when Central America was torn by civil wars. **Page 10**

Nuclear sale

Tensions between China and the United States escalated with revelations that Peking has sold nuclear weapons technology to Pakistan. **Page 11**

Kohl under attack

Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, was attacked in parliament after the announcement that the number of unemployed was well over the important four million mark. **Page 12**

Pig issue

Republican hopeful Pat Buchanan is riding high on the hog in Iowa. He rarely misses the opportunity to play to a local audience, and pigs are a big issue in the Midwest. **Page 13**



The Prince of Wales being shown around Dubrovnik to see how war damage in the Croatian resort is being repaired. **Page 12**

Shares probe

The London Stock Exchange is examining trades in shares of United News & Media and MAI ahead of the merger announcement which came the day after United shares rose 29p to 624p. **Page 21**

Armistice payout

The electronics company, whose largest single shareholder is chairman Alan Sugar, has increased the dividend despite incurring a £5.4 million first half loss. **Page 21**

Lloyd's debt cap

Names are expected to have their debt capped at £100,000. **Page 21**

Markets

The FT-SE 100 fell 17.1 to 3,708.4. The pound fell 22 cents to \$1.5363 and .48 pfennigs to DM2.2680, with the index closing at 84.3. **Page 24**

Cricket

Dominic Cork, England's principal strike bowler, left the field with a damaged knee during a World Cup practice match in Lahore and joined Robin Smith on the injury list. **Page 40**

Football

Ilie Dumitrescu, of Romania, and Marc Hotiger, of Switzerland, have been refused renewal of their work permits after switching clubs in England. **Page 40**

Rugby union

Mike Catt, the England full back, has been left out of the Bath side to play Wakefield in the Pilkington Cup. He will play for the second team. **Page 40**

Snooker

Andy Hicks, attempting to become the first wild-card entrant to win the Benson and Hedges Masters, reached the semi-finals. **Page 36**

After the screen

David Storey's evocative play about a rugby-league team, *The Changing Room*, has been superbly revived in the West End; while in Liverpool a drama explores Tommy Cooper's tragicomic world. **Page 29**

Cinema of the day

Richard Cark explains the mastery of *Still Life with Apples*, painted in 1893-94. **Page 29**

Aids ballet

The Royal Ballet has premiered *Dances with Death*, a new ballet on the subject of the Aids virus. **Page 30**

Pop on Friday

David Sinclair on new albums from The Bluebelles and the group JT, a trio of Michael Jackson's nephews; Caitlin Moran on Audioweb; reviews of Nick Heyward and Cleo Laine. **Page 31**

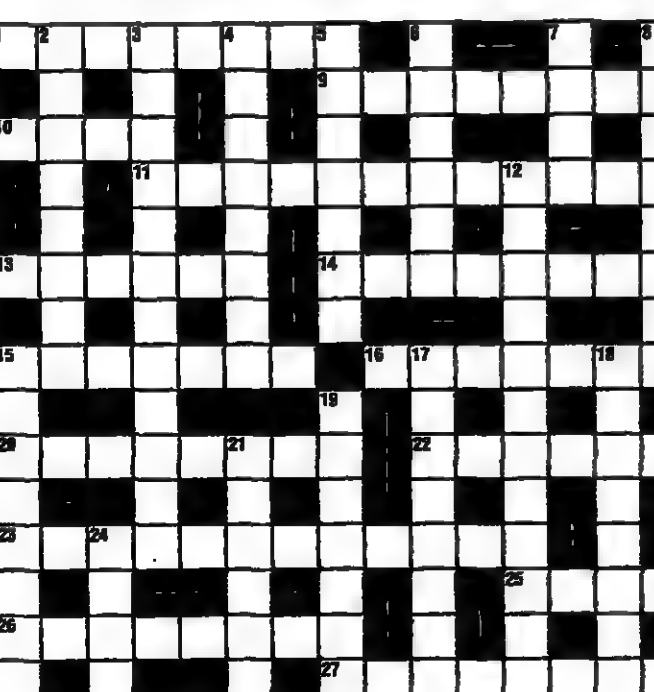
IN THE TIMES

■ **PASSION**
José Carreras on songs to swoon by, and 50 copies of his *Passion* CD to be won

■ **ROMANCE**
Valentine's gifts: the good, the bad and the cuddly. Plus: Paris, the lovers' guide



THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,086



- ACROSS**
- 1 Pull back — space is place reserved for officers (8).
 - 9 A spiel about endless money could get one hooked (8).
 - 10 Tree with sap acceptable to people? Just the opposite (4).
 - 11 Courtier lover runs away from writer (2-10).
 - 13 As joke, clear basket (6).
 - 14 Understand place to eat is within one's reach (8).
 - 15 Judge in Israel had robe altered (7).
 - 16 State team captain initially an American (7).
 - 20 Falls, having a problem seeing (8).
 - 22 Indian poet volunteers to shed blood (6).
- DOWN**
- 2 Hand this round? (12).
 - 25 Type of rain-drop? Sort of (4).
 - 26 Pessimistic image on film (8).
 - 27 Terrified of daughter going to university (8).
 - 2 How one might get me into musical work? (12).
 - 25 Type of rain-drop? Sort of (4).
 - 26 Pessimistic image on film (8).
 - 27 Terrified of daughter going to university (8).
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 - 25 Type of rain-drop? Sort of (4).
 - 26 Pessimistic image on film (8).
 - 27 Terrified of daughter going to university (8).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,085

TOWER OF BABEL
REARRANGE TO FORM
A NEW WORD
ADAPTS AS REVERSED
OFFEND FORECAST
BUNGALOW BUFFET
RUB DO
ERASABLE SUMMER
WINDSETTLEMENT
EXCEL CULMINATE
RECAULOMINATE

TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0800 500 followed by the appropriate code.

Region	Code	Forecast
Greater London	701	Greater London
West/Surrey/Sussex	702	West/Surrey/Sussex
Devon/Hampshire	703	Devon/Hampshire
Wiltshire/Devon	704	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	705	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	706	Wiltshire/Devon
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Wiltshire/Devon	727	Wiltshire/Devon

AA ROADWATCH

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Area	Code	Information
London & SE	731	London & SE
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West/Surrey/Sussex	733	West/Surrey/Sussex
Devon/Hampshire	734	Devon/Hampshire
Wiltshire/Devon	735	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	736	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	737	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	738	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	739	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	740	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	741	Wiltshire/Devon
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Wiltshire/Devon	743	Wiltshire/Devon
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Wiltshire/Devon	746	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	747	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	748	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	749	Wiltshire/Devon
Wiltshire/Devon	750	Wiltshire/Devon

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday's highest day temp: Penzance, Cornwall, 11°C (52°F); lowest day temp: Spangdahm, 10°C (50°F); highest night temp: Macclesfield, 8°C (46°F); lowest night temp: Bognor Regis, 4°C (39°F).

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Restrictions apply. **BAE**

General

Much of England and Wales will have a wet and windy start to the day. Over northern England any snow across the hills will soon turn to rain, with a thaw setting in generally. Brighter weather will spread from the west, although some heavy, blustery showers are likely mainly in western and southern areas.

Northern Ireland and Scotland will have a very windy and mainly cloudy day. There will be further snow over the Scottish mountains giving blizzards in the strong winds. Across Northern Ireland and the lower ground of western Scotland, rain or sleet is more likely as it turns less cold.

London, SE, NE, E England, E Anglia, Borders, West and why start. Brighter later with showers. Wind south, strong. Max 7°C (45°F).

Central S, SW, NW England, Channel Isles, Wales, Lake District, Isle of Man. Windy. Early rain.

Turning brighter with sunshine and blustery showers. Wind southwest, strong to gale. Max 8°C (46°F).

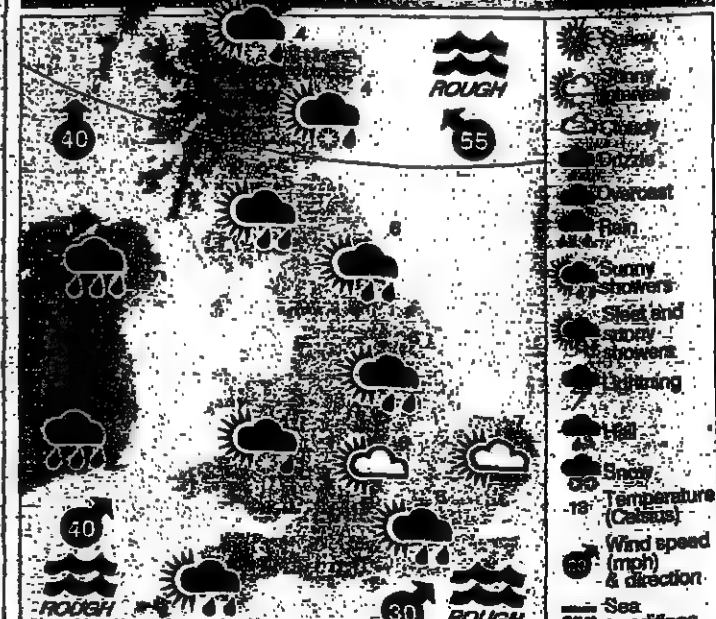
Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: Very windy. Sleet and snow at times, with blizzards in the mountains. Wind southeast, gale. Max 4°C (39°F).

SW, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll: Very windy. Rain at times but snow on hills, heavy and persistent in places. Wind south, strong to gale force. Max 6°C (43°F).

N Ireland: Windy. Mostly cloudy. Rain at times. Wind south to south-west, strong to gale. Max 7°C (45°F).

Outlook: Showers in many areas. Mainly cloudy with snow in northern Scotland.

TODAY



Changes to chart below from noon: Low A will move east. Low N will move NE and B. High H drifts E. High B will lose its identity. High O will move E with little change.



TODAY

Location	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	422	6.8	454	6.8
London	408	4.0	414	4.1
Edinburgh	818	12.6	1037	12.6
Belfast	127	3.3	136	3.6
Cardiff	633	11.5	953	11.2
Doncaster	228	5.2	844	5.2
Dover	117	0.6	129	0.4
Dublin (N. Wall)	332	2.9	624	2.6
Edinburgh	234	3.0	750	2.6
Glasgow	315	3.1	324	2.6
Harlow	207	3.8	232	3.8
Leeds	620	5.2	103	5.2
Manchester	301	7.1	369	7.2
Nottingham	329	8.9	849	8.7
Portsmouth	467	9.7	819	9.7

BOOKS

Libby Purves and the weird side of the weather

Page 13

PLUS: Andrew Roberts on the NCR jury, page 12

SHOPPING



Romance ratings for Valentine presents

Page 7

PLUS: shopping in style in Paris, page 8

OUTDOORS



The quest to create 1,000 village greens

Page 15

PLUS: a sailor and his engine, page 15

TRAVEL



Paris: dreamy days in the city of love

Pages 18, 19

PLUS: a honeymoon relived, page 17

WEEKEND

THE TIMES SATURDAY FEBRUARY 10 1996

HOW TO HIT A PUBLISHER FOR MILLIONS



Four million bucks for two books? exclaimed an elderly man in a corridor outside the Manhattan court where Joan Collins this week entered a legal battle with her publisher. The old New Yorker whistled in wonder: "Who does she think she is? Shakespeare?"

The case of Random House (UK) & Random House Inc v. Gemini Star Productions Ltd & Joan Collins has blown the bonnet off the publishing world. Book commissioning and editing, once seen as cardigan-and-cocoa occupations, have been unveiled as

complex, brutal, zappy affairs. Thanks to Joan Collins we have seen the big-cigar decisions modern publishers take, the highly complex discussions which must take place before a word of a novel is written.

Miss Collins, less acclaimed as a writer than her sister Jackie, was offered \$4 million (about £2.6 million) not because she could turn a pretty sub-club but because she is a movie star. People know her. Aged 62, she still exudes that ineffable fragrance of *eau de grandeur*, perfected over decades in showbusiness. Her arrival on Tuesday morning at the drab courthouse just

By Quentin Letts

south of Manhattan's Chinatown was an event in itself. When she alighted from her car she flashed her teeth and let her earrings glint under the flashbulbs of the paparazzi. Summoning her thespian powers she declared that Random House had been — a swallow for dramatic effect — had been, well, "cruel". She claimed to be speaking up "for many other authors" and voiced her confident expectation of victory.

It was superstar stuff but little else would

do. Random House, one of the great powers of publishing, is peeved to a high degree. It is dissatisfied with the manuscript Miss Collins delivered for one of the books, *A Ruling Passion*, she agreed to write for \$4 million, and it wants the return of \$12 million it paid as an advance. The court heard the Collins prose described as "very primitive, dated, dull, clichéd". She is countering for the balance of the \$4 million, arguing that it is no matter whether the work was dreadful or not. What matters is that it was a "complete" manuscript, as demanded in her contract.

Despite the vast sums she was receiving,

Miss Collins expected detailed attention from her editors. Her lawyer, Kenneth Burrows, said that she was accustomed to intensive "face-to-face, line-by-line, page-by-page" editorial help. It was not given.

This sort of assistance is the norm for celebrity authors. Lord Archer takes close advice from experienced book editors when composing his commercial masterpieces. The routine is exhausting. Editors suggest alterations, help the author to improve descriptive passages, make dialogue more convincing.

Continued on page 3, col 1

Choose your weapon.



Don't forget Valentine's Day is next Wednesday, February 14th.

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Planning to see a show or a film, an exhibition or a concert? *The Times* critics select the best entertainment

OPERA

Rodney Milnes

TRISTAN AND ISOLDE Wagner is no longer as central to the operatic repertoire in London as once he was — a combination, perhaps, of changing tastes and management's inability to afford overtime payments — so Wagnerites will leap upon the English National Opera's new staging of his obsessional love-equals-death drama, sung in Andrew Porter's English translation. David Alden, a dab hand at operatic obsession, directs, with designs by Ian (An Inspector Calls) MacNeil, and the cast is led by Elizabeth Connell and George Gray, singing their roles on stage for the first time. Mark Elder conducts: a guarantee of top musical quality. Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, London WC2 (0171-632 8000), today, 4pm; Wed 14, 5pm. (5)

SAMSON ET DALILA Another, more succinct glance at erotic obsession, though Saint-Saëns wrong-foots you for the first 20 minutes by pretending it is an oratorio. There is nothing oratorio-like about Jacques Delacôte's brazen conducting when the juices start to flow, and there is shamelessly grand-operaic singing from Markella Hatziano and José Cura in the latest Covent Garden revival. The *Bacchanale* is just the job for tired businessmen, too. Royal Opera House, Bow St, London WC2 (0171-304 4000), tonight, 7pm; Thur 15, 7.30pm. (5)

CLASSICAL

Richard Morrison

BIRMINGHAM PREMIERE Nothing less than an "introduction to the world" is attempted in a new piece by Sally Beamish. The piece, *A Book of Seasons* is dedicated to the composer's new-born daughter, and will be premiered by the ever-enterprising Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and the evocatively named BEAST (Birmingham Electro Acoustic Sound Theatre) next Friday, in a concert that also includes music by Oliver Knussen, Judith Weir, Jonathan Harvey, Boulez and Stravinsky. "Ever heard anyone argue that all modern music sounds the same?" asks Weir. "This is the concert that argues back." Adrian Boult Hall, Paradise Place, Birmingham (0121-605 6666), Fri 16, 7.30pm. (5)

PIANISTS' WORK Plenty of twinkling fingers at the keyboard this week. Jack Gibbons gives only the second performance in history of Alkan's stupendously difficult 12 Etudes. Op 39 (Queen Elizabeth



Jack Gibbons plays Alkan at the Queen Elizabeth Hall

Hall, Thur 15, 7pm. András Schiff opens his Bartók and Haydn series at the Wigmore Hall (Mon 12, Wed 14, next Sat 17, 7.30pm). And tomorrow, at the Barbican, sparks will fly as Nikolai Demidenko tackles a Chopin and Schumann

programme. Lucky the city that can boast such an array of pianistic riches in the same week. Let's hope they all get the audiences they deserve.

Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (0171-960 4242); **Wigmore Hall**, Wigmore St, London W1 (0171-935 2141); **Barbican**, Silk St, London EC2 (0171-638 8891).

ROCK

David Sinclair

ETERNAL Comfortably lodged in the Top 30 with their second album, *Power of a Woman*, and nominated for Best British Dance Act in next week's Brit Awards, Eternal step out for their first dates here since slimming down to a trio. Although their music is modelled on the American sound and style, they are a formidable homegrown talent in a field that has traditionally lacked a strong British presence. A "spectacular" new show is promised, incorporating a full live band, backing singers and dancers. Guildhall, Portsmouth (01705 624355), Feb 15; **Bournemouth International Centre** (01902 297297), Feb 16; **St David's Hall**, Cardiff (01222 878444), Feb 17. Also Wolverhampton, York, Nottingham, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Manchester, Sheffield, Cambridge, Bristol, Croydon, Wembley, Belfast and Dublin.

BABYLON ZOO A musical amalgamation of David Bowie and Suede adapted for the post-grunge era, *Spaceman* has become one of the fastest-selling British singles ever. But the band's identity conceals the fact that Babylon Zoo's debut album was played and recorded in its entirety by singer and songwriter Jas Mann. He clearly has a lot of theatrical flair, but will the boy with the X-ray eyes and his henchmen — now, he is able to cut the mustard as a live act? London Astoria, 2, London WC2 (0171-434 0403), Feb 16.

THEATRE

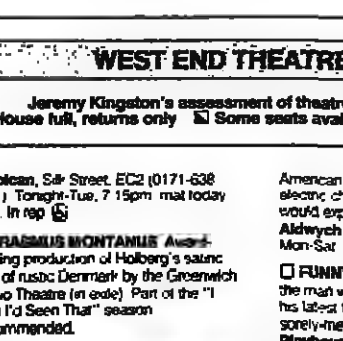
Benedict Nightingale

STANLEY Stanley Spencer's first wife sacrificed herself totally for him, his second grabbed what she could get from an "oil" she openly despised, while he floundered between the two, like a sticky-fingered child baffled by the grown-ups. Antony Sher, a bedraggled gnome in corduroy bags and ill-fitting specs, gives a meticulous, funny and moving performance in Pam Gems's play, which is both an intelligent portrait of the peculiar loves of an important modern painter and a study of female archetypes in action. Cottesloe, National, South Bank, London SE1 (0171-928 2252), Evenings: Mon 12 to Thur 15, 7.30pm; matinee: Tues 13, 2.30pm. Continues in repertoire. (5)

VALLEY SONG The joy of Ashol Fugard's first post-apartheid play is that the author himself is onstage, a tiny, bearded figure playing both a writer seeking sanctuary from the urban hubbub and an old farmer afraid of eviction. Social and political change puzzles and worries both men, but for the other character, a 17-year-old Cape Coloured, it represents the chance of escaping the rural outback and fulfilling her dreams in the big city. Out of all this comes a ruminative, questioning piece which gently suggests that South Africa's future may not be altogether easy. Royal Court, Sloane Square, London SW1 (0171-730 1745), Evenings: Mon to Sat, 7.30pm; matinee: Thur 15, 3pm, Sat 17, 3.30pm.

ROYAL COURT Sloane Square, London SW1 (0171-730 1745), Evenings: Mon to Sat, 7.30pm; matinee: Thur 15, 3pm, Sat 17, 3.30pm.

ATHEL FUGARD, Esmeralda Bihl at the Royal Court



Athel Fugard, Esmeralda Bihl at the Royal Court

BAC, Leinster Hall, Battersea, SW11 (0171-223 2229), Tue-Sat, 7.30pm, Sun 5.30pm.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE Sam Mendes's radiant production: Zoe Warrack and Celia Sornier play mother and daughter Ben Widen in Tom Stoppard's play. Park Theatre, SW1 (0171-369 1731) Mon-Sat 7.30pm, Sat 3pm.

LES ENFANTS DU PARADIS Helen McDermid Joseph Fennell, Rupert Graves in Simon Callow's disconcerting and long (a half hour) version of the film.

THE FIELDS OF AMBROSIA (where everyone knows you) Preposterous

AMERICAN musical about love and the electric chair. Also, as underlined as you would expect. Aldwych Theatre, W1 (0171-416 8048) Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mat. 5pm, Sat 3pm.

FUNNY MONEY Ray Cooney plays the man who finds a bag of cash notes in his latest take. Rodney Davies as the surprised lad. Playhouse, Hornum-bent, Avenue WC2 (0171-339 4431) Mon-Sat, 8pm, mat. 5pm, Sat 3pm.

HEAVEN BY STORM The Umbra Brothers, otherwise the 3-journalist acrobatic comedians Shane Dundas and Dave Collins, bring their rigorous and alluring show to London. Arts Great Newcomer, WC2 (0171-588 2132) Now, pre-viewing 5pm, Sat 7pm.

AN IDEAL HUSBAND Triumph return for Peter Hall's production of Wilde's drama of political sleazebag and scandal. The cast includes Martin Shaw, Anna Carter, Penne Dore, Theatre Royal, Haymarket, SW1 (0171-580 8800), Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mat. 5pm, Sat 3pm.

AN INSPECTOR CALLS Stephen Dillane's powerful production, with Nicholas Woodeson as the all-knowing Inspector, and Edward Peel and Susan Engel as the pillars of society. Garrick, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171-494 3828) Mon-Fri 7.30pm, Sat 8.15pm, mat. 2.30pm, Sat 5pm.

JOLSON The tragic and love of the singer with a monster ego. Brian Cobby belts out the songs and Sally Ann Timper is an impressive Ruby Keeler. Victoria Palace, Victoria Street, SW1 (0171-434 1317) Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mat. 5pm, Sat 3pm.

LEE EVANS The rubber-boned comedian comes to the West End for a short season. Lyric, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5049) Mon-Fri 8pm, Sat 8pm and 9.30pm.



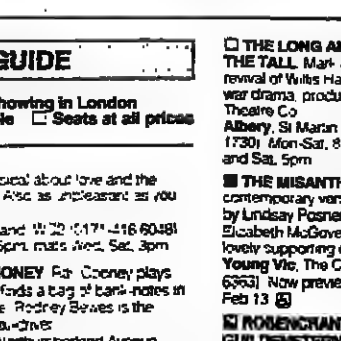
José Cura brings grand-operaic singing to Covent Garden in Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila* (see Opera)

GALLERIES

Richard Cork

BRIDGET RILEY A double helping of recent work by one of our most rigorous and enervating painters. At Waddington Galleries large paintings fill the space with a remarkable sense of energy. Hints of sunlight falling through a wood give way, finally, to the realisation that Riley is above all else an abstract artist. She revels in visual complexity, and never lets us come to rest as we tussle with her teasing ambiguities. In the gouaches shown at Karsten Schubert a paler and more airy side of her work is revealed. At 65, Riley may well be entering a more expansive and hedonistic phase — without, of course, sacrificing her formidable lucidity and structural control. Waddington Galleries, Cork Street, London W1 (0171-437 8611) and Karsten Schubert, 41-42 Foley Street, London W1 (0171-631 0031), until March 2.

PAUL CÉZANNE For the first time in decades, the totality of Cézanne's awesome achievement is revealed in a great exhibition.



Tête à Tête: self-portrait of the artist Cézanne, circa 1866

charged with enormous vitality, and after 1880 Cézanne learns how to channel all that fervent emotion into an art of overwhelming grandeur. He turns from Romanticism to a Classical discipline, but there is nothing dry or excessively

calculated about his later work. The firmness with which he structures his figures, landscapes and still lifes is seasoned with sensual power. An unmissable show, filled with awesome and delectable work which amply repays hard, concentrated looking. Tate Gallery, Millbank, London SW1 (0171-887 8000), until April 28 (for tickets ring First Call on 0990 661 010).

JOHN PEARCE

SCOTTISH DANCE THEATRE Neville Campbell, who formerly ran the Phoenix Dance Company, might seem an appropriate director for this new group arising from the ashes of the Dundee Rep Dance Company. Six dancers in four works make up their opening programme, to which Campbell gives the title *Human Tales* as an indication of where his interests lie. They begin in Edinburgh before a two-month tour.

St Brides Centre, Edinburgh (0131-346 1405), Thur 15 to Sat 17, 7.30pm; **Dundee Rep Theatre** (01392 223530), Fri 19-20; **Dovecot Arts**

CLOCKERS (18). Spike Lee's heavy-handed version of Richard Price's novel about young drug-dealers in Brooklyn. With Harvey Keitel, Delroy Lindo and Mark Wahlberg. Empire (0171-437 1234) MGM. Trocadero (0171-434 0031) Ritz. UCI Whiteleys (0171-732 3332).

DESPERADO (18). Overblown love-up to 12 minutes, with Antonio Banderas as the dark-clinging killer seeking vengeance. Director: Robert Rodriguez. Clapham Picture House (0171-438 3328) MGM. Chelsea (0171-332 5098) Haymarket (0171-437 1327) Tottenham Court Road (0171-436 6148) Ritz (0171-737 2121) UCI Whiteleys (0171-732 3332) Warner (0171-437 4343).

JOHNNY NEMO (15). The Yakuzas want the contents of Kenji Reeves's head. Futuristic folly from cyberpunk author William Gibson. Director: Robert Longo. Odeons: Kensington (01425 914665) Belfrage Cottage (01425 914098) West End (01425 915274).

A LITTLE PRINCESS (U). See *Choice*, above.

LOCH NESS (PG). Ted Danson looks for a love and a half-hearted adventure. With, as usual, director, John Henderson. MGM. Fulham Road (0171-370 2636) Trocadero (0171-434 0031) UCI Whiteleys (0171-732 3332) Warner (0171-437 4343).

RENDEZ-VOUS IN PARIS (PG). Three tales of love and chance. Featherweight delight from Eric Roberts, with Diane Keaton and Kimberly Williams. Director: Charles Shyer. MGM. Belfrage Cottage (01425 914665) Kensington (01425 914098) Leicester Sq (01425 915863) Marlin Arch (01425 914301) Swiss Cottage (01425 914 099) UCI Whiteleys (0171-732 3332) Warner (0171-437 4343).

THE FLOWER OF MY SECRET (15). Chats plots for a woman writer of romantic fiction. Strangely subtle and tender drama from Pedro Almodóvar. Curzon Mayfair (0171-389 1723) Gate (0171-727 4043) Rankin (0171-437 4343).

ANGELS AND INSECTS (18). Provocative games in Victorian England. Handsome but stiff drama, with Mark Rylands, Patsy Kensit and Kristin Scott Thomas. Director: Philip Haas. MGM. Fulham Road (0171-370 2636) Rankin (0171-437 4343).

WHITEFIARS GLASS The glass factory of James Powell & Sons first opened in 1834. During the first century of its existence it was associated primarily with the nascent Arts and Crafts movement and worked with William Morris, selling through Liberty and Tiffany among other outlets. In 1923 the company went through a revolution and embraced modernism wholeheartedly. The best-known product was a series of streaky, cloudy, richly coloured pieces. Post-war, the company tended more towards the crisp simplicities of Scandinavian modern. The factory closed in 1980, and its work has since been neglected. This show, and an authoritative book, edited by Lesley Jackson, the curator, should help to redress the balance. City Art Galleries, Mosley Street, Manchester (0161-236 5244), Mon, 11am-5.30pm; Tues-Sat, 10am-5.30pm; Sun, 2-5.30pm, until June 30, then at the Museum of London in a reduced form.

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Centre, Stockton-on-Tees (01642 611625) Mar 1; The Place Theatre, London (0171-387 0031), Mar 8, 9. Also Liverpool, Bury, Inverness, Kircaldy, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Stirling, Cumbernauld and Paisley (details 01382 229500).

CINDERELLA Michael Corder has created a new *Cinderella* to Prokofiev's music for English National Ballet. David Walker is the designer. Corder, who began his dancing and choreographic career at Covent Garden, has worked abroad lately; this is his first full evening work to be seen in Britain. The Mayflower, Southampton (01703 71811), Wed 14 to Sat 17, 7.30pm; matinee: Thur 15, Sat 17, 2.30pm; Palace Theatre, Manchester (0161-242 2503), Feb 19 to 24; Bristol Hippodrome (0117 929 9444), Feb 25 to Mar 2; London Coliseum (0171-632 8300), Mar 25 to 27.

Geoff Brown

A LITTLE PRINCESS (U): A gorgeous family film that even improves on *The Secret Garden*, another Frances Hodgson Burnett novel recently remade for the screen. The powers of imagination are central to the tale of the "little princess", an English officer's daughter left in a New York boarding school while he fights in the First World War. They also sustain the director, Alfonso Cuarón. This relatively untitled Mexican shows uncommon mastery of the Hollywood machine, and his players, none starry names, never succumb to saccharine sweetness or heavy caricature. Liesel Matthews is the girl plunged from riches to rags, and Eleanor Bron the malevolent headmistress who tries to outlast make-believe. MGMs: Chelsea (0171-332 5098); Tottenham Court Road (0171-436 6148); Trocadero (0171-434 0031); 6148; Trocadero (0171-732 3332); Warner (0171-437 4343); Watermaes (0181-568 1176).

WITHNAIL & I (15): Bruce Robinson's cult comedy about two would-be actors at the end of the 1960s, enduring a miserable break in the Lake District, returns to the screen on its tenth anniversary. The film casts a beady eye on 1960s follies, and observes its characters with loving care. Paul McGann takes the role of "I", the bemused innocent struggling to escape from the advances of Withnail's uncle (Richard Griffiths). But this is Richard E. Grant's show. His Withnail is outrageously self-centred, an endless fountain of caustic remarks; and his black bile keeps the film alive. MGMs: Fulham Road (0171-370 2636); Shaftesbury Avenue (0171-336 6279); Ritz (0171-737 2121).

John Russell Taylor

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THE FLOWER OF MY SECRET (15). Chats plots for a woman writer of romantic fiction. Strangely subtle and tender drama from Pedro Almodóvar. Curzon Mayfair (0171-389 1723) Gate (0171-727 4043) Rankin (0171-437 4343).

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INSIDE STORY

ONE CELEBRITY author demanded that any limousines provided to her during her promotional tour of Britain must be a certain shade of blue to match her eyes. There must also be three suites at the Ritz one for her, one for her manager and one for her hairdresser. Different demands arrived by the day and eventually her London publisher despaired of her antics and scrapped the tour, to cheers from his office colleagues.

□ A New York agent insisted that his client be greeted with champagne at every new location. Unless sufficiently chilled there would be "trouble".

□ Authors stipulate that the publisher must provide a glitzy launch party — for instance, in New York's skyscraper Rainbow Room restaurant with its magnificent views.

□ "Only five-star hotels will be tolerated on tour," ran one contract. "The public would think anything else improper." Another touring author insisted: "My manager and personal assistant will need their own limousines, to be available 24 hours a day."

□ Celebrity authors can stipulate the right to refuse to go on certain chat shows, perhaps because they are too tough or because a show's host has in the past said bad things about the author.

ALAN NEVINS, a former assistant to "Swift" Lazar (Joan Collins's late, legendary agent), counsels his Hollywood clients against silly demands. "Some celebrity authors will expect, say, a party for their book at the American Booksellers' Association," he says. "Launch parties are effectively for the author and friends. They do not tend to help the book financially."

'Most arguments are about hotels, stretch limousines and the number of staff'

Continued from page 1

and delete clichés, excessive adjectives and dull characters. Joan Evans, the perma-tanned Random House editor who gave evidence against Joan Collins this week, said she — Evans — and a line editor had gone through "16 drafts" of a book with Lord Archer at his house in the Bahamas. Once that was done, she had jetted off to London to work with Michael Caine.

This is publishing in the mould of international trouble-shooting. We have come a long way from the domineering figure of popular imagination who reaches into his in-tray in Bloomsbury and discovers a brilliant manuscript which needs little more than a few typographical tweaks before it can be sent to the printer.

The turbines of modern publishing turn in places such as the midtown Manhattan skyscraper offices of the William Morris agency, a mighty concern which represents politicians, sportsmen, tycoons and, lest one forgets, authors. The décor as you enter the impressive atrium is space-age and muted corridors stretch in all directions. By the outer walls, in high-tech box offices, sit the executive agents, talking urgently, breathily, into state-of-the-art telephones. In the inner core of this giant monument to modern publishing, meanwhile, sit the assistants, runners and clerks, handsome youths with designer haircuts and a sharp view of the world.

Don Strone, a William Morris agent who specialises in marrying celebrity clients to

hungry publishers, surveyed global publishing this week from his high office window and said: "A person's celebrity status creates an expectation of high sales, which in turn creates an expectation of big advances. Some people in publishing just do not know how to handle stars. I package a book before taking it to the publisher. Once you have a ghost writer or collaborator and you know what the celebrity is prepared to talk about, there are few problems."

Strone concedes that prima donna behaviour can be a problem, but that comes with the territory. "You have to treat these people like stars. You have to expect that they will want to travel first class, in limousines. Most arguments are about hotels, stretch limousines and the number of staff people want to take when travelling. If you try to nickel-and-dime people, they are not going to be co-operative."

When Amy Tan's publishers, HarperCollins, wanted their much-loved star author to come to Britain to promote her *The Hundred Secret Senses*, she was worried about leaving her 20-month-old dog, Babba. The publishers promised to provide daily doggie fixes with animals borrowed from friends so Tan was never lonely. She came.

Stan Socher, the editor-in-chief of *Entertainment Law & Finance*, a monthly New York newsletter, said: "Publishing is going the way of the rock 'n' roll business. Just as one rock star likes to demand that the



Random House paid Marion Brando \$5 million for his memoirs

M&Ms in his dressing room are separated into different colours, celebrity authors have started to behave in a way many people might consider outrageous. As book publishing has become a mega business, more companies are accepting these demands. They are recognising the star qualities of authors.

"Celebrity book deals are a high risk for publishers," Socher said. "When the hit comes, it can be big, but many times they simply do not pay off and you see some celebrity books which are quickly offered at cut price in bookshops." Random House paid Marion Brando \$5 million for his memoirs, *Songs My Mother Taught Me*, but they were a critical and commercial disappointment, not helped by the slim amount of promotional activity the reclusive Brando agreed to do.

Hilary Rubinstein, a veteran London literary agent, says there have been some "gross and preposterous advances" paid to certain stars in recent years. He feels that Random

House must have known, when going into the Collins book, that some fairly serious editorial roadworks would be needed. The size of the Collins deal is a credit to her late agent, the legendary Irving "Swift" Lazar, whose shade has hovered over the week's court proceedings. "This is Swift's last hurrah," said his former assistant, Alan Nevins.

Much of the gossip among London publishers last year centred on the £100,000 paid to Naomi Campbell for a novel, *Swan*, that she had clearly done little to write.

There was also *Sweet Life*, a woe-filled effort by Brit Ekland: Martina Navratilova's lacklustre *The Total Zone*; and a dizzy volume from Ivana Trump, written with more than a little help from a former *Dynasty* scriptwriter called Camille Marchetta. Campbell's book was largely the work of Caroline Upcher, who is now building a literary name for herself.

In the political world, Baroness Thatcher had a whole team of assistants for her memoirs. At one point during composition the work was considered so dry that the team had to attend an anecdote summit

when they sought desperately for jokes to insert. Still, Lady T's substantial advance proved a fair investment.

Edwina Currie, thanks to her high profile and an eye for a good story, has attracted great commercial interest in the book trade but her novel was completed only after discreet tweaking. Sebastian Coe, the Tory MP and former star runner, is currently working on a novel to coincide with the Olympics. He has an assis-

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY

CHOICE WORDS

Was this the man she loved? The man two short months ago that she had promised to love and honour till death parted them? Alain looked pretty, debauched, strange. His yellow hair was beginning to be laced with grey now and there were tired lines running from his nose to his mouth.

"What have you been doing, Alain? Tell me the truth, please, because I know."

"Know what, cherie? His face was a picture of boyish innocence. "What do you think you know, my little cabbage?"

"Don't call me your little cabbage," she said savagely. "I'm nobody's cabbage. Not yours, not anyone's."

"What is it?" he asked. "This isn't like you. What's wrong, Venetia?"

"You're gay, aren't you, Alain?" she asked calmly. "You're still gay, after all these years." He stared at her, his eyes so blue like hers, dazed, then he drained his glass of vodka and went to pour another. "Who told you?" he answered huskily.

They couldn't believe it when they saw the rushes... Venetia's young, bronzed body filled the screen, writhing, moaning and screaming in paroxysms of pleasure which, Fabio could tell with an unaccustomed flash of jealousy, were not faked... both men knew they had a goldmine on their hands.



Supermodel Naomi Campbell with "her" novel, and (left) an extract from the Joan Collins manuscript

tant. And Michael Heseltine's political books were composed with the sort of help a minister becomes used to, although, as a dyslexic, the Deputy Prime Minister has a better excuse than many authors.

It is not only celebrity authors who take close editing. Such acclaimed "masters" of the pen as Clive Cussler and Jack Higgins receive scrutiny at the editing stage. What they may lack in technical perfection they balance with an intuitive sense of what readers want. Few authors, in truth, present really "clean" copy.

Richard Cohen, one of London's most respected publishers, used to edit Alistair MacLean. The thriller writer was literate but languid. "With one of his novels I read the manuscript and told him that he had too many heroines," recalls Cohen. "He replied: 'Oh well, Richard, just kill one of them off.'" The next time they met, MacLean told

Cohen: "You killed off the wrong one, Richard — but not the matter."

Sources at the Manhattan offices of Random House, domain of the wizard Harold Evans, suggest that patience with celebrity authors may have been exhausted, but Evans has only to think of the success he had with General Colin Powell's memoirs last year to know that his company can scarce afford to give up on them. What the Collins case does illustrate, perhaps, is the growing determination of publishers to be more assiduous about retrieving advances they feel have not been earned. This is confirmed by Stuart Proffitt, the publisher of trade publishing at HarperCollins. "It is part of the general tightening-up in the book business," he said.

Proffitt believes there is no way that readers can be fooled by "books that have been cooked up. Artificially manufactured books generally have a shelf life of about three and a

half minutes," said Proffitt, who has just finished three months working on the next Lord Archer novel.

Is publishing really so much worse nowadays? Hilary Rubinstein worked on the publication of Muhammad Ali's autobiography. He recalls the book's launch party at which the champion boxer was asked by a reporter: "Did you write the book yourself?" Ali looked to the ghost writer at his side, pointed at the man, and said: "No. He wrote the thing. But I told him WHAT to write."

Joseph Conrad derived much benefit from the editorial efforts of Ford Madox Ford. And ghost-writing was taken to literal levels by Thomas Hardy. After Hardy's death in 1928 his widow produced a biography of her husband. It was a good 25 years before people realised that the book — not a critical volume, let us say — had been written by Hardy himself.

Books, pages 12-13

John Selwyn Gummer joins a small, lunchtime congregation in London

Strength in the unity of prayer



THE CHURCH of St Mary-le-Strand in London sits in the middle of the road where the one-way system forces the traffic to choose between crossing Waterloo Bridge, or continuing down to Trafalgar Square. When St Thomas A Becket was its rector, it stood on the sandy edge of the Thames but that church was demolished in 1549 to make way for the palace of the Lord Protector, the Duke of Somerset.

It was not until 1724 that the parish had its own church again when James Gibbs completed his first important work in the Italian Baroque style, which he had learnt when studying under Carlo Fontana, the Vatican architect. There is something very un-English about this baroque box. St Mary's. So much so that the royal arms of George I above the apse seem oddly out of place in this exuberantly foreign setting.

We are not a large congregation for the lunchtime service, perhaps a dozen spread about the church. Yet we are given the full Sung Eucharist with four hymns — no half-measures here. Indeed that sums up the church. The ornate ceiling may have been the work of English craftsmen but it is certainly not recent. Its Italianate plasterwork grabs the attention up above the plain walls and high windows which are surprisingly effective in keeping the noise of the traffic out. Six candles flank the tabernacle, and there are two more on the altar, while votive lights twinkle before the fittingly ornate statue of the Virgin patron of the church.

The rector finishes tolling the bell and walks down to put on his chasuble in the tiny vestry beside the altar. The first

hymn is announced, and we are led impressively by two ladies in the front helped by the strongly rhythmic playing of the electric organ. We join in with a will and when the celebrant begins the Kyrie everyone is ready to respond and the service gets under way with a swing. There are so few of us, so dispersed, and yet so congregational a feeling. Anglican services at lunchtime are normally an effective illustration of the biblical concept of the faithful remnant; this is altogether more encouraging. We are even able to sing *Fight the Good Fight* without seeming ridiculous.

The rector has a good strong voice and sings the service effectively. We use rite B from the Church of England's *Alternative Service Book* and the continuing appeal of the traditional language contributes to that feeling of solidarity. It is not only those present who are not

presuming to come to the Lord's Table — we are joined in that by the whole company of so many generations past. Yet within this traditional form we are left in no doubt about the relevance of our faith to the world of today. As befits the Bishop of London's chaplain to the homeless, Father Derek White prays with clarity and directness for the needs of those outside. His language is simple and immensely effective.

As we pray for those caught up in war and disaster, for the addicts and the alcoholics, for the sick and the departed, he creates a sense of real concern for each as he remembers them. It is the anniversary of the Queen's accession and in a sentence he communicates her sense of duty to the nation and her very present need for our prayers. This is no ritual listing, but real intercession.

Indeed, here is a praying congregation. During the notice of the rector reminds us of the coming of Lent. The parish has a full programme of services for every day, save Mondays. It has produced a special Lenten book with a reading, meditation and something specific to do on every day of the penitential season. Clearly there is an expectation that we will want to make a good Lent. There is only a single roll-call of communicants in a church which could hold three hundred, but the sense of a worshipping community impresses itself forcibly upon the visitor. The nearest person may be three or four pews away, but there is no feeling of isolation. Instead of being a lonely upholder of an ancient faith, you know you are part of the blessed company of faithful people.

St Mary-le-Strand, Strand, London WC2R 2LS. Tel: 0171-836 3205. Lunchtime services are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1pm.

★ A five star guide ★

ARCHITECTURE: A really good first try from the man who built Radcliffe Camera in Oxford, and the Cambridge Senate House. ★★★★★

MUSIC: Two stars well earned. ★★

LITURGY: Good, average Anglican High Church. ★★

SPIRITUAL HIGH: You can get the strength of a praying congregation. ★★

AFTER-SERVICE CARE: What! In the middle of the traffic in the Strand!!

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GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q I have a large yew hedge. Can you tell me if cuttings can be used in a medicinal way and who to approach about collecting them? — Ms E. Wallis, Crossways, Dorset.

A Yew clippings can be used in cancer research and there are several companies that collect them. There is even a small payment per kilogram for the clippings. Companies are interested in relatively small amounts, even a couple of large bin-liners full.

There are certain things you need to know before collection. For instance, clippings must be kept cool. Small amounts can be spread out in a shady place but large heaps will heat up like compost, so some firms supply special sacks, complete with a fan to push air into the centre of the sack. Collection should follow quickly after cutting.

Some firms offer different prices according to the quality of the clippings, ranging from clean, feathery clippings to twiggy stuff. Most are not interested in anything of more than pencil thickness.

Q Our problem plant is *Yucca gloriosa*. Adam's needle, which blooms too late in the year, at Christmas. Can you suggest a way to cure this? — Mr J. Norman, Lincoln.

A With leaves as sharp as a yucca's around, who can blame Adam for wanting to stitch together a loincloth? Yuccas are fabulous in bloom, but that 6ft white candle is always late. In a cold garden, it pays to plant it against a south wall to speed nature along, or to plant the smaller but earlier *Yucca filamentosa*.

Q Some years ago we took over a garden in which somebody had planted grape hyacinths.

The things are spreading like a plague, and thrive on weedkillers such as Roundup and Tumbleweed, and when they have spread into gravel paths, shrug off PathClear and even sodium chlorate. Any ideas? — Dr M.D. Begley, Frome, Somerset.

A A pretty blue, but insidious, aren't they? Muscari grow from a small white bulb, producing lots of bulbils every year as well as seedlings. They spread like mad, by fork and hoe and mouse and mole. Think hard before introducing them into an area of close gardening, however pretty they may look as an edging.

Growing them on a grassy bank solves the problem. Removing them from a border is difficult because, like celandines, their bulbils are so numerous that it is almost impossible to dig them up. Attempts at serious digging usually let some bulbs drop even lower into the soil, making them harder still to eradicate. Heavy shade stops them flowering but will not kill them except over many, many years. However, you might smother them into insignificance with a heavy herbaceous ground cover.

Where the bulbs are in empty soil, you might try removing and sterilising the soil. What a job! Where they are among the roots of shrubs, persevere with the Roundup (glyphosate) but be sure to brush the leaves first and to add washing-up liquid to the spray to make sure it does not run off the shiny leaves. There are many things which glyphosate takes several applications to kill, and bulbs are one of them. In gravel, sodium chlorate will work, even if the bulbs have sufficient energy reserves to produce several dozen throes.

Q Readers wishing to have their gardening problems answered should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1, Pennington St, London, E1 9AT. We regret that few personal answers can be given and that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.



Stephen Anderton lightly prunes, as a start, a 12ft multistem yew that is crying out to be topiarised. To the left is a skeletal, badly pruned old apple tree that "will have to go"

The thinking man's plot

The thing to do with a new garden is nothing. Just look and plan, says Stephen Anderton

The best thing you can do for a new garden, and sometimes the hardest thing, is simply to look at it. Not to rush out and start doing things, but just to look, and think.

When I moved into my new house near Saffron Walden in Essex in December it snowed a little and then, without a breath of wind, froze for a week. All I could do was look.

Then the birds arrived. The children had hung peanuts in the kitchen window and the word got around that there was a free meal. Numbers were few at first, perhaps because the garden has been inhabited previously by a couple of rough-and-tumble dogs, but soon there was all the usual cast of garden birds, plus greenfinches and tree creepers. Below them, a posse of pheasants paraded the lawn, as if with arms behind their backs, and pretended not to be eating the fallen peanut skins.

But waiting gets you down. After the thaw, I started to spend half hours standing about in the garden, hatching

plots and plans. Mine is not a huge garden, but quite big enough. Most of the plot lies to the back of the house, on the east side, in a rectangle 80ft by 110ft. Beyond my boundary is a neighbour's field, and then a row of tall pines along the edge of a stream. If these were thinned now, a few would stand a chance of becoming grand old pines with broad heads.

In my garden there is a good matrix of trees around open lawn, and on these might hang the future garden design. Two big, mature, flowering cherries flank the south side. They will be a powerful sight when in flower, and there is no point planning much else nearby until spring shows what colours they will be. Will they be white? Will they be bilious pink? (Of course they will.) Will the birds take all the buds every year and the trees never flower? If so, they will go, because cherries are greedy, shallow-rooted trees and worthwhile only in a small garden if they perform.

Dead ahead centre, against the bottom fence, is a 30ft horse chestnut, which I take to be the ordinary white one. If it were the pink form, there would be a circular scar around the trunk, where the pink scion was grafted on to the plain stock. I would prefer it to be the white form or, better still, the late-flowering Indian horse chestnut, *Aesculus indica*, which has beautiful glossy leaves.

In time, the horse chestnut will make a good tree and a powerful focus for the bottom of the garden. But if you plant a large, greedy tree as a focus in a small garden, there is always the problem of how to handle the dry, rooty space

underneath, where nothing wants to grow. On the other hand, you can encourage horse chestnuts to hold their branches right down to ground level.

My tree is planted hard against the fence and, by the time it is a big tree, half of it will be hanging over my neighbour's land. It will be in his way. Perhaps it should go now. It is, after all, the most important place in the whole garden, and getting this right quickly would be most valuable. But no, give it a year and see what the tree does for the garden in summer. (Suddenly,

a nasty thought: if this is a conservation area I may not be allowed to take it down. I must check with the local authority planning department.)

Anyway, have I not always rallied against people who move into new houses and immediately start cutting down trees before they have had chance to see what purpose they serve? I must see it all in summer first.

Down the left flank of the garden, to the north, is my business park. Pride of place goes to the oh-so-necessary garden shed, a splendid Wendy house, rotary washing line, compost heap, another big cherry and 30ft Leyland cypresses, which are quietly smothering a deodar (Himalayan cedar) and a Lawson cypress. If the Leylands do not get the deodar, the cherry will in another couple of years.

The Leylands really ought to go although, just now, they make a fine screen, and a splash of February greenery. But soon they will be 40ft high, and then 50ft and impossibly dominating. My neighbour to the north will be able to grow mushrooms in the gloom of his south-facing greenhouse. Tucked at the back the

Leylands is a surprise. A 15ft dawn redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, sits by the fence, and at its foot a collection of handleless Edwardian garden rollers (they did so love to roll in those days). On close inspection, someone has "rolled" the redwood, and there is a sizeable patch of bark missing at ground level. The chances are that, as a result, it will never make a good, mature tree. Damn those rollers.

Out on the lawn, however, is a real promise: a 12ft multistem yew of loosely cottage-leaf configuration and crying out to be topiarised and pulled into the greater scheme of the new garden. I could resist and do that now, but should I wait? No. That I shall begin. Then it can start thickening up this year.

In general, this year should be for planning: for getting to know the soil, to see how clayey it is, to see where bulbs spring up, to clobber serious weeds, to see where the warm, sunny corners are, and the cold ones, to see if we will use the garden door in summer, and to see if the frost really does have me in its pocket. Meanwhile, the pheasants think the Leyland cypresses are wonderful, and in the dustbowl under their canopy the birds wallow in ecstasy.

WEEKEND TIPS

- Prune large-flowered clematis, tidying back early-spring flowers, and cutting down to 2ft the late-summer ones.
- Dress the soil below established hedges with bonemeal, and apply residual granular herbicides if needed.
- Sow early salad crops, such as lettuce and radish, under glass, or even in a frame or cloche.
- Resist the temptation to cut back winter-damaged grey and Mediterranean plants until April.
- Complete the removal of dead stalks and leaves from herbaceous plants to compost heap.

What's in a plant name?

SAY WHAT you like about the giving of cut flowers, the principle of the thing is safe enough. Even if the beloved cannot stand chinchinches, the flowers will at least die within a couple of weeks. Not so with plants for the garden. Giving these is a much trickier proposition, Stephen Anderton writes.

I would hesitate to ask someone to put up with my taste in plants for ever... "And how is *Yucca* 'Victorio Emmanuel II'?" Doing well for you? In fact, YVE II was probably given away at the first possible opportunity.

But it is these outrageous names which make the gift of plants stick in the mind of the present givers, and which keep them wondering how *Rosa* 'Golden Wedding' and your marriage are doing.

So popular is *R. 'Golden Wedding'* with prospective donors and, particularly, with the nursery trade that, when the first 1938 RGW disappeared from cultivation, a new one was bred to replace it. There is now a stack of golden opportunities on the wedding list, including 'Golden Celebration', 'Golden Anniversary', 'Golden Days', 'Golden Moments' and, of course, 'Golden Years'.

Find That Rose, a booklet published by the British Rose Growers' Association, lists 26 'Golden' roses.

The rose is one of those plants, along with violas, irises, rhododendrons, fuchsias and dahlias, that has attracted a huge range of first-name titles. And there is no doubt that this helps to sell them to an eponymous market.

Last year a little booklet, *The Directory of First Name Plants*, was produced, so if you want to give your *Desiree* a 'Desiree' for her birthday or as a Valentine present, you know where to look. And, if she doesn't like the plant, it will be that much harder for her to dispose of than a plant with just a Latin name. Binning one's namesake is like cutting one's toenails in public: difficult for semi-superstitious reasons.



'Golden Years', an anniversary rose

as 'Marian'. But 'Harrison' the hosta is altogether more appropriate. More chunky, 'Hya, Harrison!' That sounds more like it.

Curiously, houseleeks (*sempervivum*) have been a favourite target among plant breeders for receiving the names of mothers, wives and daughters. Curious, because it would be hard to think of a less dumpy, earthbound little plant. 'Ronnie', on the other hand, is a good name for a houseleek. Neat, cheerful and completely reliable.

Would we remember *Daphne* now, or the daughters named after her, if she, when being chased round Antioch by a randy old Apollo, had had the lack of good fortune to be metamorphosed by Mother Earth into a houseleek? Or a pebble plant?

THE TROUBLE with buying a plant for its name alone is that a familiar handle does not guarantee its quality or character. Names carry such different messages to different generations. *Salvia* 'Madonna' might mean the plant is black and spiky, or virginal white or celestial blue. Association is entirely in the mind of the beholder.

When it comes to it, most of us are capable of buying plants for others that we do not want for ourselves and without any help in the choosing from other people. Who can honestly say that at some time they have not bought a shirt with the wrong-sized collar, or an appealing plant for which one has neither real use nor space? On the other hand, how flattering it is when someone brings a plant which shows just how much they have considered your tastes and needs.

Perhaps, if I have a house-warming party, I might acquire four dozen 3ft-tall container-grown yew trees for my hedge? ● The Directory of First Name Plants costs £2 from D. and P. Hartshorn, Nonesuch Cottage, Badby, Northants NN11 3AW. Find That Rose — a Guide to Who Grows What is compiled by the British Rose Growers' Association, c/o The Editor, 303 Mills End Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 5EA.

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Making a modern medieval garden

Garden historian Sylvia Landsberg has designed Queen Eleanor's scented bower

The beautiful 15th-century French manuscript shown right is one of the sources that I used to design a garden that would soften the austere Great Hall in Winchester, the only remaining building of Henry III's 13th-century castle.

The original idea came from the Hampshire Gardens Trust, which proposed that a royal pleasure garden of around the same period as the castle be re-created. In 1986 Hampshire County Council built the garden, and it is now open to the public.

The garden is named after the queens of Henry III and his son Edward I - Eleanor of Provence and Eleanor of Castile respectively. They were the first queens in this country to have a recorded interest in gardens. Eleanor of Castile even arranged to pay for her Moorish gardeners to return to Aragon on her death, in 1290. It may have been through the queen's continental background that the brightest stars of the medieval herbaceous border, such as pot marigolds, wallflowers, lavender and the hollyhock, were introduced to England.

Queen Eleanor's Garden as a whole - as opposed to the bower garden - illustrated above - is a narrow triangle, some 10yd x 30yd, typical in size and shape of the tiny



The flower-filled bower, left, created as part of Queen Eleanor's Garden in Winchester, was based on this 15th-century French illustration. The whole garden is packed with flowers and ornaments

castle gardens of the time, which were wedged between buildings. It is also similar in size and position to many private London gardens and, like many small, modern ones, it is packed with flowers and ornaments in the upright as well as the horizontal plane. A bronze falcon perches atop a hand-carved, stone fountain, a water channel trickles through the garden, and there are stone and wooden benches, with decorations copied from local contemporary garden features. A rose and vine-covered arbour leads towards the enclosed flowery bower where a medieval queen might have retired to play chess or rest.

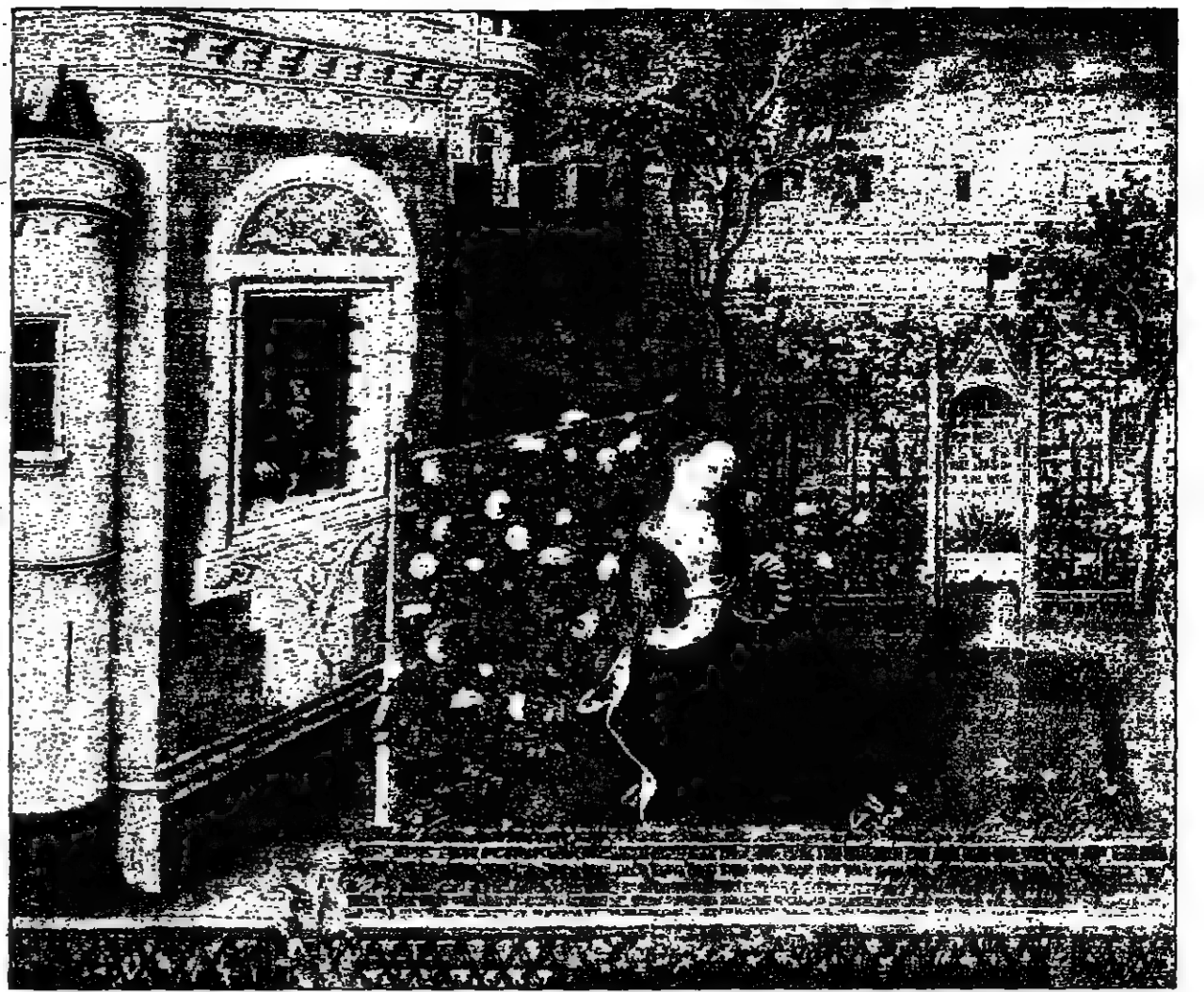
This is the part of the garden illustrated above, and it is typical of the period. At all levels of medieval society there

would be some corner in a garden in which to sit and perhaps eat or drink. The style would range from rough banks and a crude trestle table in a peasant garden, to a high level of carpentry in a royal or aristocratic garden.

The medieval painting shows a turf bench surrounding a turf 'carpet', the whole probably enclosed by a low brick wall. Planted in a bed built into the top of one wall is a border luxuriant with red and white pinks, taller single carnations and probably marjoram. In the larger surrounding garden, not shown, other scented plants, such as lavender and stocks, complete the olfactory picture. On three sides of the bower garden the backs of the turf seats are planted with red and white roses. *Rosa gallica officinalis*

and *Rosa alba* - now known as the roses of Lancaster and York. Although the method is not visible, these roses are either interwoven into, or tied back onto, the trellises. The back of the enclosure is completed by the vines on the side of the tunnel arbour.

Elaborately carved posts support diagonal and square-patterned trelliswork. At the



top of the arched entrance there is a heraldic crest, confirming a wealthy owner. The picture illustrates Boccaccio's *Enzica*, ('weaving a subtle garland for her head' in Chaucer's translation for 'The Knight's Tale'), sitting here in the shade of two hawthorn trees.

In Queen Eleanor's Garden this French medieval illustration has been re-created to a size of 4yd x 5yd. The turf seats were constructed from stacks of turves to a height of about 20in, filled with soil behind, used to grow the plants. All this is contained within a low wall of limestone blocks. The seats were originally newly fronted each autumn with peeped-on turves. It has been difficult to prevent these from drying out, and one wonders if they were created for short visits only - a Chelsea flower show effect.

The garden trelliswork is made from 3in x 3in square oak posts, onto which a square trellis of canker poles is nailed. The arched way is topped by a gold-leafed ball and heraldic shield displaying the quartered devices of Eleanor's father, King of Leon and Castile, which she was entitled to use - gold castle on red, purple lion on white. These were copied from her gilded tomb in Westminster Abbey.

The garden has the same species of rose - Lancaster and York - as in the illustration. Careful pruning prevents the onset of rust.

Pinks and carnations cannot be grown since these did not reach England until the end of the 15th century. Instead, yellow wallflowers and native cowslips for spring are alternated in the summer with single pot marigolds - *Calendula officinalis* and the little native pansy, *Viola tricolor*, with winter savory for scent.

This planting scheme panders to the greater visual demands made by visitors rather than the priority given

to scented plants in medieval times. The roses flower for only two to three weeks in late June or early July. A painting, deceptively, flowers all year. The little 'herber' is finally carpeted with wild flowers, in particular ground ivy, a germander speedwell, giving a fleecy sheet of blue in May. A table on which to play chess completes the scene.

There are many reasons why one would not wish to transform a present-day private garden into one of medieval style. Short flowering periods, floppy plants, proneness to rust and mildew, late opening of vine buds, to name a few. However, some features described here can look well in a modern garden, and a chapter in my book (details left), explains some of the techniques.

FACT FILE

- Based on *The Medieval Garden*, by Sylvia Landsberg, British Museum Press, £12.99. Available February 12, 1996.
- Queen Eleanor's Garden is open daily from 10am-5pm but is best visited from April to early July. (Queen Eleanor's Garden, Great Hall, the Castle, Winchester, Hants.) Admission free.
- The author is a garden historian, designer and lecturer who specialises in 12th to 17th century-style gardens, 118 Highfield Lane, Southampton, SO17 1NP.

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Putting the Roman back into romance

Jill Parkin tests a selection of Valentine presents to see if they succeed in setting your beloved's pulse racing

The Roman fertility festival of Lupercalia is just days away and there's not a wolfskin thong to be had anywhere. Not for love or money. First the sacrificing of dogs was outlawed, then wolves became extinct in Britain, which made running about in their skins tricky. Finally, public thronging of women lost some of its political correctness. Eventually Valentine's Day took over — and it's all about love and money.

Instead of enjoying a good old fertility festival, we send an out-of-season red rose with a weak neck that breaks after a day or two. Who was St Valentine anyway? He has been omitted from the calendar of saints' days as probably non-existent. He has survived only because his alleged martyrdom day falls a day before Lupercalia.

Be conventional on the 14th if you wish, but purists should reclaim their day with something Roman. Examining the entrails of a dog for omens may be going a bit far, but there's no reason why you shouldn't shuck an oyster or 12 and examine their innards with a loved one. Half a dozen of the aphrodisiac bivalves will cost £13.50 at Wheelers in London and Brighton or £3.95 at the Magpie Café in Whitby.

Today's Antonys might fancy giving asses milk to their Cleopatras, but will probably have to settle for a bathful of goat or sheep milk instead. That could be pricey: Harrods charges £1.10 and £1.30 a pint.

If you'd die for your love, send him a CD of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and hope he arrives with several gallons of sheep's milk to douse your funeral pyre before it gets too warm.

If your sweetheart is literary-minded, remember the Romans were good on erotica. Whatever your sexual preference, Catullus (*Poems*, Penguin Classics, £6.99), and Ovid (*The Erotic Poems*, Penguin Classics, £8.99) will have done it and commemorated it in verse.

I've always wanted a man to buy me posies of seeds of all Shakespeare's flowers. He could plant them in a Bard border, and I could trip among them muttering about rosemary for remembrance and pansies for thoughts. If you like the idea, but not the digging, go for the book — *Shakespeare's Flowers*, Royal Shakespeare Company, £4.99 — telephone orders 01789 296860.

Underwear is a tricky one. The shops I rang all said: "Something red for Valentine's Day." I think red is tart, but men call it passionate. Only to be embarked on if you know your love really well.

For a cheeky variation on the chocolate theme, try Chocolate Body Paint (BHS, £3.50). It's for spreading on ice-cream, bread or bodies. Not to be mixed with expensive underwear.

You could actually use the line "Come up and see my designs" if you had one of the heart designs by Jenny Tapping waiting for your sweetheart. The tiny, hand-coloured exchange range from £11.50 to £19.50. Ring 01787 247855 for details.

If you have the money to shop at Carter (0171-493 6962) and yet would like to keep tabs on your investment, their gold love bangle (from £2,600) may be for you. It has to be put on by the giver and comes complete with screwdriver.

Lupercalia was still on my mind when I asked our Valentine testing panel to check out a few of this year's gifts. "Send me a young man in a wolfskin," I cried. Instead, I got Perry Cleveland-Peck, an editorial assistant at *The Times*, in a silk shirt.

Our panel consisted of Perry, 25, my husband, 53, my stepdaughter, 16, and me, 37. In all cases, our judgment may have been distorted by consumption of too many chocolates.

▼ **MOSS TEDDY BEAR**
Fitzroy's, £35 (0171-722 1066). Next-day delivery in London. Allow up to a week for the rest of the UK. With regular watering the bear could last three years.

JP: When I first saw him I wasn't sure, but he's growing on me.

Husband: He's very good, but I'd be rather worried if someone gave him to me. Who was that chap in *Brideshead*? I'd only give it to someone who was mad about bears. And I don't think I'd want to be involved with a woman who was mad about them.

PC-P: He's fantastic. I'd definitely buy him for my girlfriend. I'd be pleased to be given him too. (Perry and Teddy left the testing together.)

Sweet 16: He's fun. He doesn't scream "commitment" at you. Non-threatening.

Heart rate — 5 out of 5. But only for the young ones. And isn't three years of watering a commitment?

▼ **HEART-SHAPED CALCULATOR**
Fenwicks, £13.50. Available by mail order on 0171-629 9161. With jewel-coloured keys.

JP: I haven't got the self-confidence to like something that vulgar.

Husband: Does it play a tune?

PC-P: For teenagers — but it's tacky.

Sweet 16: I actually know someone with one of these. Not for me. I suppose if you put it on your desk it tells the world you've had a Valentine.

Heart rate — 1. My three-year-old fell for it but her idea of a Valentine is Thomas the Tank Engine.

▼ **FLOWERS FOR A MAN**
Interflora, £30 — freephone number is 0500 43 43 43. Our florist came up with a burst of red and yellow — sunflowers, amaryllis and carnations, backed up with eucalyptus and willow. It was the hit of the testing, even with my husband, who had complained about the smell of some hyacinth flowers the day before.

JP: Just right for a man. Nothing droopy or Victorian about this. No ribbons, no scent. Given to a woman, it wouldn't be romantic, but this would knock a chap over without being cloying.

Husband: Almost shockingly good. It's in a water-bag, so you don't have the fuss of having to arrange it. I'd just plonk the whole thing in the salad bowl. If you had this in your flat and a mate came round, you wouldn't be embarrassed. Just the job. Not smelly, either.

PC-P: I'd be really flattered if a woman sent me flowers. No problem with that at all. These make a good splash.

Sweet 16: I'm not really into flowers. It's quite a heavy thing to send someone.

Heart rate — 5. Ask your florist for "a good splash".

▼ **LOVE ME, LOVE ME NOT CUFFLINKS**
White enamel cufflinks with small red hearts, one broken. Sackville and Jones from Fenwicks, £14.95. Available by mail order on 0171-629 9161.

JP: I've never bought a man cufflinks. These are quite jolly. Small and not flashy.

Husband: They're witty. I'd wear them.

PC-P: I'd be quite thrilled with these. Cufflinks are a great idea.

Sweet 16: Pass.

Heart rate — 4.

▼ **AMOR VINCIT OMNIA PICTURE FRAME**
Metal gilt-embossed frame 4in x 3in with small heart-shaped cut-out for photograph. Modulus from Fenwicks, £23.95. Available by mail order on 0171-629 9161.

JP: It's good and heavy but it doesn't improve with time.

Husband: Hideous.

PC-P: It's OK, nice and weighty. I like it more than when I first saw it.

Sweet 16: Not at all.

Heart rate — 2.

▼ **HEART AND BIRDS WALL HANGING**
Red plaster heart, 6in high, with two lovebirds perched on top. Liberty, £9.95. Mail order: 0171-734 1234.

JP: I like this. It may be heart-shaped but it looks a bit rough-hewn, almost distressed, which stops it being naff.

Husband: I like it more than I did at first. In the right place it would be fine: there aren't many right places.

PC-P: I've been to houses full of things like this. It's good.

Sweet 16: It's worse than the picture frame. It looks like a decoration from a house in Neighboors.

Heart rate — 3.

▼ **CHARBONNEL ET WALKER CHOCOLATES**
Heart-shaped box with I Love You or other message in gold-wrapped choccs, £34 for 28oz or heart-shaped chocolates in hand-made fabric box, £20 for a quarter of a pound. Available by mail order on 0171-491 0232.

JP: The little hand-made box is lovely. If it's an established relationship, this is the one.

Husband: No. Go for quantity. The big box is the one. The I Love You message is irrelevant. The heart-shaped box registers with you and you can't wait to tear into the choccs.

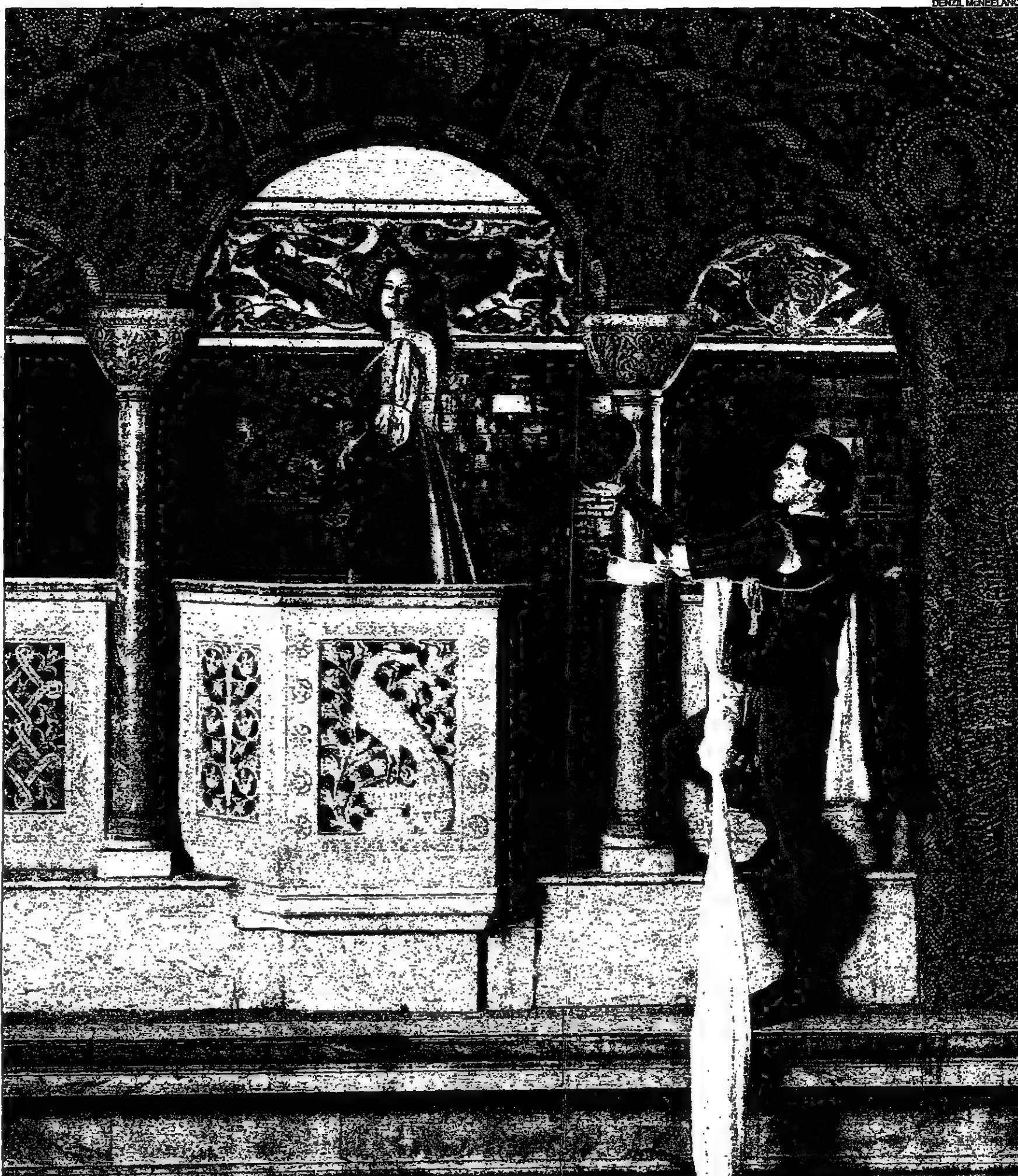
PC-P: They're beautiful and sexy. I'd prefer these to underwear any time.

Husband: A bit different. Quite a strong message — not for someone you've just met at the bus-stop.

PC-P: A lovely romantic gesture.

Sweet 16: Almost as good as the choccs.

Heart rate — 4.



Romeo and Juliet would probably opt for the traditional love tokens of flowers and chocolates, but you could try the moss teddy bear from Fitzroy's, £35

distressed, which stops it being naff.

Husband: I like it more than I did at first. In the right place it would be fine: there aren't many right places.

PC-P: I've been to houses full of things like this. It's good.

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Sweet 16: Almost as good as the choccs.

Heart rate — 4.

▼ **HAND-MADE CARDS FROM THE RSC**
Royal Shakespeare Company, 01789 296860. Printed with hearts and a romantic quotation from Shakespeare, £2.85 or £10 for four; also from Liberty, £3.95.

JP: I think these are adorable. Mass-produced cards can be dreadful unless you get those "blank for your own message" ones.

Husband: They're almost a present in themselves. Though it's rather playing the field to buy four in a pack, isn't it?

PC-P: I like this idea. It shows you've given the person some thought.

Sweet 16: Exactly. It's much nicer than just grabbing something off the shelf.

Heart rate — 5.

▼ **COSUMERS: ANGELS & BERNAUS**
(0171-836 5678).

Flowers: Paula Pyke (0171-837-7373) for Interflora.

Shot at The Peacock House, Addison Road, Holland Park, London, with thanks to the Richmond Fellowship.

Heart rate — 5.

Heart rate — 5.

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Heart rate — 5.

Hearts and flowers — variations on a theme



Romeo with Flowers for a Man arrangement from Interflora, £30



Above, from left: bed cushions, £15.99; hand-made cards, £2.84 (or £10 for four) from the Royal Shakespeare Company; heart and birds wall hanging, Liberty, £9.95



From left: Amor Vincit Omnia picture frame, £23.95; cufflinks, Fenwicks, £14.95; calculator, £13.50



Juliet with Charbonnel et Walker chocolates, £34 for 28oz box

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for people who love to cook

PROPERTY

The not so bare necessities of ambassadorial life



Nice place, smart area, in-and-out drive—ambassadorial necessities in Courtenay Avenue, Highgate, north London, for sale at £1,450,000

Diplomatic relations on millionaires' row

The estate agents' description "ambassadorial residence" is becoming a London what "baronial hall" was to the country. Many substantial houses for sale in the capital are being deemed suitable dwellings for diplomats in the same way that rural estates were elevated to aristocratic status. But what constitutes an ambassadorial residence?

A fine place to start would be in Courtenay Avenue in Highgate, north London. The road runs parallel to what is said to be London's most expensive residential street, The Bishop's Avenue, the domain of the very rich, who occasionally rest their jet-lagged heads there.

Courtenay Avenue has the benefit of being a cul-de-sac; no through traffic to the North Circular near ever disturbs sleep or intrude on privacy. Admittedly, the avenue is second best, but it is not without its chandeliers.

Our example (above) is No 7, which is for sale at £1,450,000 through the agents Keith Cardale Groves. The house has five reception rooms, a Gothic chapel, extensive garden, four bedrooms, a guest suite, games room, staff flat and a large driveway. Impressive but why does the agent describe it as being "ambassadorial"?

Chris Underhill, the manager of KCG's Highgate office, says: "For a start, there are six or seven ambassadorial residences in the road. The house is presently occupied by a diplomat and the road is a low-profile and secure environment. Should there be an official function, temporary barriers can be erected to control access. And, of much importance to diplomats, it has an in-and-out driveway."

The house is large enough to entertain at least 200 people. It's also near the centre of London, yet far enough north of Whitehall to hear the birds tweeting in the morning, says Mr Underhill.

There are many aspects, then, for a diplomat to consid-

er. Ambassadors have to have parties in properties that bring kudos, for which an ordinary semi or a public room in a hotel will not suffice. But there are houses elsewhere that seem uncomfortable with their new role.

Last November, The Times Diary reported that residents in Kensington Court Gardens, southwest London, were miffed because the Belorussians had been granted planning permission to convert a house into an embassy, with an ambassadorial flat over the shop. Opposition came from, among others, Sir Ronald Arculus, a former British ambassador to Italy.

Wishing to keep his part of Kensington as residential as possible, he complained that the embassy and residence would cause traffic congestion, a shortage of parking spaces, queues for visas and the occasional noisy demonstration. He lost his battle.

Holland Park, west London, is the latest to experience a new diplomatic invasion. The Uzbeks, Belarussians and Ukrainians are opening embassies and residences there, and some of their reluctant neighbours are displaying signs of nimbysism.

Others are less convinced that diplomatic neighbours are a problem. Willy Gething, who runs Property Vision, which buys houses in central London, says that such complaints "don't hold much sway". He speaks from personal experience. "I was near a number of residences and embassies when I was living in Holland Park," he says, "and I suspect that the local



£3.95 million would buy this house in Hamilton Terrace, St John's Wood

Frank, gardens and in-and-out driveways are features that the ambassador must have. "Such attributes are particularly useful for really big functions," he says, "especially on the country's national day of celebration." But there are few properties of this sort within Mayfair and Belgravia that haven't already been snapped up by diplomats, and this is why so many official residences are starting to appear in areas such as St John's Wood and Highgate.

In St John's Wood, Knight Frank is offering a three-story house in tree-lined Hamilton Terrace at £3.95 million with an 89-year unexpired lease. The white stucco-fronted, detached, eight-bedroom house has a large landscaped rear garden and plant room, separate staff flat, driveway, video entry and security system, but does lack spacious reception rooms.

For ambassadors on a more limited budget, Knight Frank is offering a freehold house in Highgate with seven bedrooms, an in-and-out driveway and a 124ft garden at £1.4 million.

Those with a large house to sell in central London may be tempted to believe that theirs could be described as "ambassadorial". And they could be right. Brian D'Arcy Clark, of the agents Chestersfield, stipulates that: "Much of the accommodation can be modest, but the reception rooms have to be large. The space can vary from 3,000sq ft to 10,000sq ft. Freehold is preferred, and the property has to be in good condition, or requiring only a few minor alterations."

Falling that, if you have a little place tucked away in the Home Counties, why not put it up for sale as a "consular cottage"? Even diplomats need weekends away.

GUY WALTERS

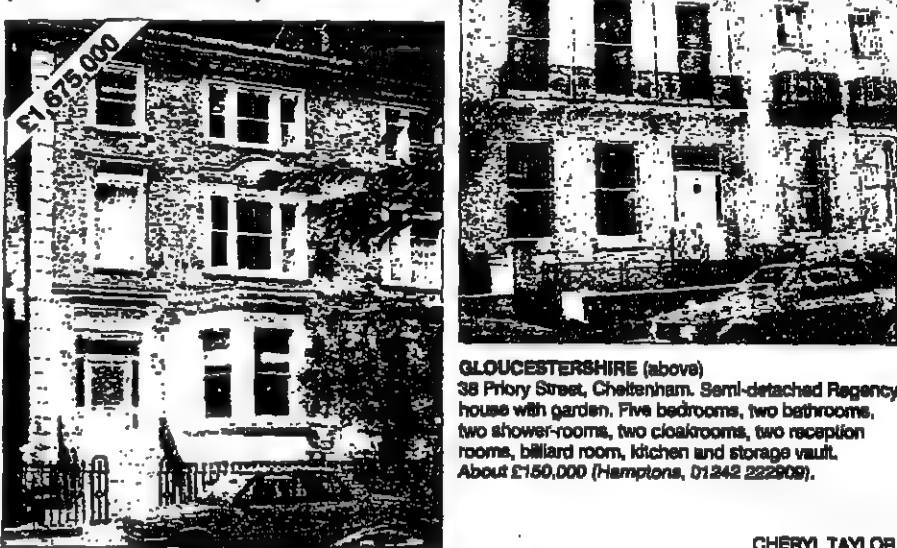
© Keith Cardale Groves, 0181-341 6666, Property Vision, 0171-423 8338, Knight Frank, north London, 0171-431 8886; Mayfair, 0171-581 8171; Chestersfield, 0171-581 5234.

FOR SALE

SMART SEMIS



DEVON
Rambler Cottage, Inner Hope, Hope Cove. Semi-detached thatched cottage in the square at Inner Hope, with sea views. Three bedrooms, bathroom, lounge, kitchen/breakfast room (with exposed beams and inglenook fireplace). About £114,500 (Fulford, 01548 843731).



CHERYL TAYLOR

PROPERTY

Martin Grant Homes



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12

BOOKS

Quick and the dread

■ RUDE GIRLS
By Vanessa Walters
Pan, £3.50

VANESSA WALTERS is a sassy-looking, black, 18-year-old author from north London who is already at work on her second novel. To judge from her debut, *Rude Girls*, it too will be tightly plotted, with a good ear for dialogue, a slightly enervating propensity to list every item of clothing her heroines are wearing and a moral-happy denouement five pages from the end.

Things move along with enough bounce and vigour to satisfy the teenage readers this is aimed at — Yardie's daughter Shree, single mum Paula and upwardly-mobile Janice have been best friends "since the beginning of time" and look for relief from the white-out oven of London summer in all-day festivals and endless mutual hair-dressing sessions. Things start to go pear-shaped when Shree's dad shoots a business associate in the middle of a drug deal and the three girls are bound up in a revenge attack.



Walters: bounce and vigour

Further pressure is put on the friendship by Shree's lust for a dodgy Yardie who always turns up at the most inopportune times in a large black Mercedes and "accidentally" snogs her just as the plot needs a fight or an argument. Meanwhile, Paula forges more independence from her domineering mother and Janice has a run-in with a snarling yuppie in the throes of denying his blackness.

While Walters displays unerring enthusiasm and a healthy disrespect for her male characters, her failings are all too apparent by the third chapter, stolid storytelling unrelieved by those bursts of imagination and prose that mark out the truly gifted from the merely talented. Still, should her career as a novelist fail to take off, she has some interesting ideas about coiffure and should do well as a hairdresser.

CAITLIN MORAN

A member of the NCR Book Award panel, Andrew Roberts is confident of avoiding the acrimony that has dogged other prizes

A most gentlemanly jury

When my car was stolen last December, driven to Stoke Newington and completely stripped, the thieves left only three articles: my green wellies, my wife's classical tapes and *The Architecture of Southern England* by John Julius Norwich. Perhaps they already had a copy.

If so, may I recommend to them another of Lord Norwich's works, *Byzantium: The Decline and Fall*, the third and final part of his great trilogy. It has been submitted, along with 144 other works of history, biography, travel and non-fiction for the NCR Book Award, of which I am one of the five judges.

When the judges met for the first time at AT&T's headquarters on the Marylebone Road in London just before Christmas, Jeremy Paxman, our chairman, set out a few, very

welcome, ground rules. We were not expected to read all 145 books but should each take away the 20 or so which most interested us. The prospect of being forced, for the first time since Eng Lit A level, to read all of a book I did not necessarily like therefore receded. Next month we will read each other's three or four favourites to create a shortlist.

Our last meeting, to choose the winner, takes place in the hour or so before a huge dinner at the Dorchester on May 22.

The other ground rules — that we would not take into account how rich the winner is before awarding the £25,000 tax-free cheque, or

consider what other awards he or she might have won or narrowly missed — were also agreed on quickly. My whispered question about the ethics of taking away some books to give as presents to family and friends was answered by a magisterial wave of Paxman's hand. "Treat it like Christmas shopping without the money."

Under the aegis of the formidable Dotti Irving, who has run the prize (formerly and henceforth called the NCR Book Award) for a decade, we finished quickly and left.

Whatever advertising executives may say to the contrary, I do not believe we remember advertise-

ments in newspapers. So literary awards do work in bringing the name of a company to public attention. For the price of two or three full-page advertisements in the national newspapers, AT&T can organise and pay for an award which will get its name into the all-important editorial as opposed to just the advertising pages.

The winner gets a large cheque, the runners-up receive £3,000 each, the judges also receive a modest fee for their half-year readathon, the company gets free advertising into diary stories and columns like this, the public gets the fruit of our deliberations and the literary world

gets fed at a grand dinner. Book awards are thus proof that sometimes capitalism can benefit everyone.

Having met the other judges — Cristina Odone, Nick Hornby and Sue Butterworth — I suspect I shall soon be feeling like the shrivelled and embarrassed little man in the Bateman cartoon at whom everyone in the cocktail party is staring and pointing. The caption shall read: "The man who served on an uncontroversial book award." I simply cannot see the five of us yelling or intriguing or playing the martyr when it comes to making our choices.

The Booker and Whitbread seem almost designed for these rows, with Julian Crutchley and Rachel Cusk dashing off into print the moment the choice is made. Georgie Greig, book editor of *The Sunday Times*, has recently called into question the entire basis of the Whitbread selection process. Last year's AT&T, chaired by Alan Clark, which controversially plumped for a dismal autobiography rather than Juliet Baker's much-tipped and brilliant life of the Bromé family, was no exception. I predict this year the NCR award will be professional, dignified, serious, harmonious if not unanimous, and therefore instantly forgettable in the great saga of book prize rows.

© Andrew Roberts's novel *The Aachen Memorandum* is published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson

The next time I see Paris

Jan Morris is captivated by a new, definitive guide to the City of Light that is good enough to eat

WE LIVE in the heyday of the guidebook — just as we live in the heyday of travel. True, the guidebook as a work of literature seems to be a dead notion: no Richard Ford are telling us of Valencians ("perfidious, vindictive and empty of all good"); no E. M. Forsters are advising us how best to look at Alexandria ("wander aimlessly around the city").

In every other kind, though, the genre flourishes as never before. We have guides for the rich and guides for the indigent, for the cruise buff and the backpacker, for gays and for senior citizens. We have architectural guides more brilliant and informative than ever, and we even have solid, old-fashioned academic guidebooks, not perhaps as pithy as the old Murrys and Baedekers, but still written by scholars for serious travellers.

This week sees the publication of what one might call the flagship of this immense and wildly assorted fleet. A few years ago Gallimard, the venerable Paris publisher, launched yet another new kind of guide, intended to be more permanent, more sumptuous and more seductive than any. In England the series was adopted and adapted by Everyman Books. French in style and inspiration the series remains, nevertheless, and so it is proper that it reaches a climax now in the publication of the *Everyman Guide to Paris*, one of the most alluring guidebooks ever published.

As a souvenir of a visit somewhere, or as a book to read in bed at the end of the long day's tourism, the *Everymans* are unbeatable. They

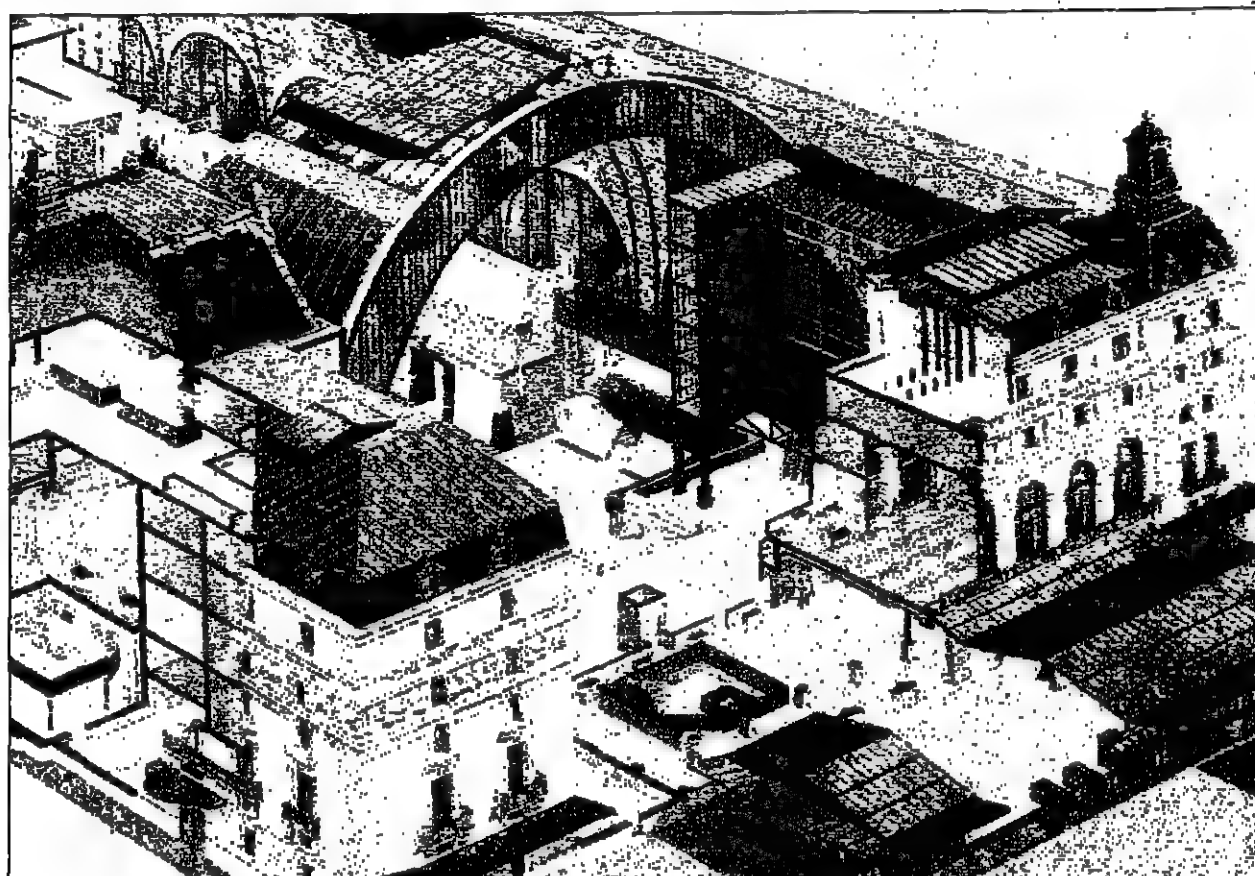
■ EVERYMAN GUIDE TO PARIS
Everyman, £16.99

look lovely. They are elegantly printed on rich, shiny paper. They are virtuous examples of the designer's craft, and they assume an adult interest in every aspect of a place.

Not all the *Everymans* concern cities — some are about countries or regions, and there is one about Parisian restaurants — but they are best suited to the discussion of a metropolis, and though Paris is by no means my favourite city, the *Everyman Paris* is as good an example of the series as any. It feels and smells so good that, rather than spend a small fortune on some hyped-up entrée in a concealed Paris restaurant, I would eat it.

The range of the book is astonishing. I am not surprised that more than 200 advisers, authors, researchers, illustrators, designers and photographers are acknowledged at the front. It contains hundreds of architectural drawings and cutaways, from Roman Lutetia to La Défense. It discusses and illustrates street furniture, haute couture, gardens, wildlife, museums, women's department stores, the Seine and, of course, cuisine. There is a lovely portfolio of paintings by the great painters of the city. There is an anthology of quotations from writers as varied as Boswell, Joyce, Alice B. Toklas and Evelyn Waugh.

And there are also, though less satisfactorily, the conventional registers of a city guidebook: city walks delineated monument by monument,



Inside story: cutaway illustration showing the structure of the Musée d'Orsay, from the *Everyman Guide to Paris*

lists of shops, hotels, restaurants ("not the place for a casual tourist, but for people who really understand food, such as the sophisticated Parisians who... came to taste the carpaccio of langoustines with caviar" (ugh)). The whole work is strewn with maps and glorious illustrations, and would make old Mr Baedeker, or John Murray Esquire, turn in their graves with envy — or embarrassment.

For there is something a little embarrassing about these marvellous examples of bibliotechnique. They are a little over-marvellous. They never let up. Intended as the

very latest thing, they end up by being rather *fin-de-siècle* — *dir-neuvième siècle* — like langoustines with caviar. But these are the quibbles of a Welsh ascetic. If you love Paris, you will doubtless love this book, not as a transient aid to sightseeing or gourmandism, but as a reference book of great beauty and lasting fascination.

I am collecting all the *Everyman* city books, against the time when I can travel no more, and they will come and sit with me beside the fire and be my memory's guide.

Travel, pages 18 and 19

CHART WATCH

THIS week, Peter Høeg's *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow* notches up one year in the paperback chart. Briefly nudged out by the Penguin and Phoenix 60p volumes, it has now clocked up the full 52 weeks. Good going for a novel whose success owes much to word of mouth but whose author's name is unpronounceable to all but his fellow Danes. The nearest contender is Sebastian Faulks's elegant war novel, *Birdsong*, with 45 weeks.

Meanwhile, Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* and *Acid House* showing strongly. The end of the festive season is firmly signalled by the arrival of Rosemary Conley's *Complete Flat Stomach Plan* at No 17, and the end of the festive hangover by the reappearance, at No 16, of Malcolm Gluck's *Superplonk* 96.

AUDIO BOOKS

Eye on the ball

■ CLOUGH THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Written and read by Brian Clough
Corgi Audio, £8.99 (3 hours)
BRIAN CLOUGH has a good story to tell, though he stumbles over his words. He is a working-class hero, a gifted forward, a dedicated football team manager, and he never suffers a single moment's self-doubt. One cannot help feeling that English soccer would have been infinitely more fun if Cloughie had run our national team for a spell.

when he died, there was an outpouring of national affection for him. This collection of his journalism since 1980 celebrates his wide interests, from history to marmalade, from religious belief to life up North and retirement. His erstwhile colleagues from *Today* read his work attentively, sometimes reverently.

■ MISSING JOSEPH
By Elizabeth George
read by Derek Jacobi
Corgi Audio, £8.99 (3 hours)
AN unchallenging - murder mystery starts with a meeting between a vicar and Deborah St James in front of the Leonardo cartoon of the Virgin and Child at the National Gallery. They both wonder: where's Joseph? When Deborah and her husband visit the vicar, they find he is dead. Hints of witchcraft, violent sex and police corruption flesh out the Rendell-style mixture.

RUSSELL TWISK

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Exhibition runs until April 14

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David Jacobson: Diaghilev's vision of 'The Seasons'

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Alexander Benois: Design for the Emperor's coronation in 'Le Tsarévitch'

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Very heaven not to be young

■ LOOK THE DEMON IN THE EYE: The Challenge of Mid-Life
By Angela Neustatter
Michael Joseph, £17.99

IT IS AS though the fashion designer Calvin Klein, when playing a word-association game and hearing the word "young" immediately snapped "forever". This would not endear him to Angela Neustatter, who believes in accepting the loss of youth without demur.

Do not be put off her book by its title, which contains two of the most off-putting words in the English language: challenge and mid-life. Neustatter is a mite earnest but she writes engagingly and you end up feeling better about middle age, as I insist on calling it, than you did before.

Neustatter sees the time when children have grown up, partnerships have faded into the limbo and career prospects are dwindling as a period when kicking over the traces might be permissible. Among her 150 interviewees are several who walked out on their commitments. A few of them feel regret but, what the hell, it added to their personal growth. And most of them are happy that they listened to their body clock and were brave enough to make enormous changes at almost the last minute.

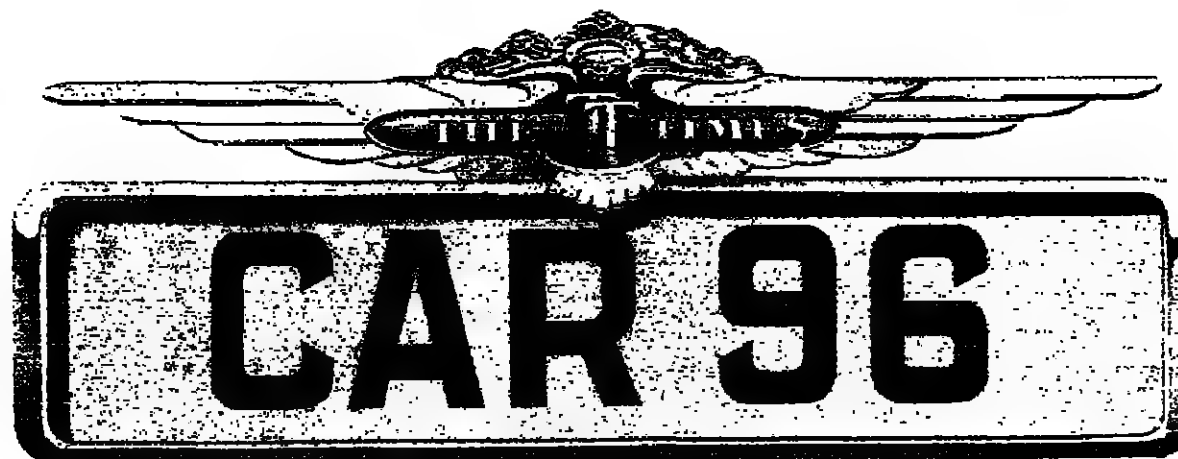
Neustatter does not underestimate the problems of the middle years — the possible loss of love, libido and looks — as well as the nuptial invisibility in the eye of the world that comes with the first grey hair. But she deftly sniffs out signs of the changing times: more job opportunities for the middle-aged because there are fewer young people; more notice taken of them by advertisers, not because they are suddenly fated for mature allure but because of the dizzying statistic that the over-fifties "probably own about 80 per cent of all the wealth in Britain". An example of this changed approach is that the supermarket chain that hired Lesley Joseph in her role of Dorien (the nymphomaniac of a certain age in the television sitcom *Birds of a Feather*) to star in its commercials saw sales zip through the roof.

Neustatter has sensible things to say about preparing for retirement — although some of them sound alarmingly hearty. She does not try to convince fiftysomethings that the best is yet to come but suggests the possibility of growing old without feeling that even one toe is already in the grave.



Wrap up
warm and
drive to
the limit
of taste

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How new
exhaust
tests have
plunged
into chaos

Page 2



SATURDAY FEBRUARY 10 1996

My unforgettable One for the road

Tony Dodgins,
Grand Prix editor
of *F1 Racing*,
discovers what
F1 reality is like
behind the wheel

Tyrrell's regular driver, Mika Salo, paced about like some expectant father. He was worried about "his baby" having all its limbs.

The Finnish Formula One ace had been smart enough to negotiate one of the 1995 cars for keeps at the end of its useful life — a moment that was seemingly fast approaching. The car was out there on a drenched Barcelona track in the hands of a journalist whose racing experience amounted to a season of endurance Pro Karting.

Now, Pros weigh around 100 kilos and are powered by two 5.5bhp Honda generator motors; a Tyrrell-Yamaha 023 weighs 500 kilos and has a monstrous 700bhp. A power-to-weight ratio roughly 13 times as great.

Cross, mindless stupidity or simply extreme folly? Could a mere mortal handle it? A man more used to climbing into a Sierra 4x4. A man whose painstaking preparation amounted to five laps of Barcelona in a Citroën Xantia Turbo Diesel the day before... in the dark?

Ken Tyrrell will be 72 on May 3. It is 27 years since his team won the first of three world championships with Jackie Stewart. He's seen it all. Still, he wanted to see this. When I pointed out we shared a birthday, a broad grin lit up the craggy features. "I just hope you're going to see a few more..."

My previous record was not good. I'd piled up a Formula Ford and destroyed someone else's Lotus Cordua at Silverstone. "Have you any idea what you are letting yourself in for?" Tyrrell wanted to know. "The deal is this: we will insure the car and you will insure yourself. If a tyre goes down and you kill yourself — tough. We are not responsible."

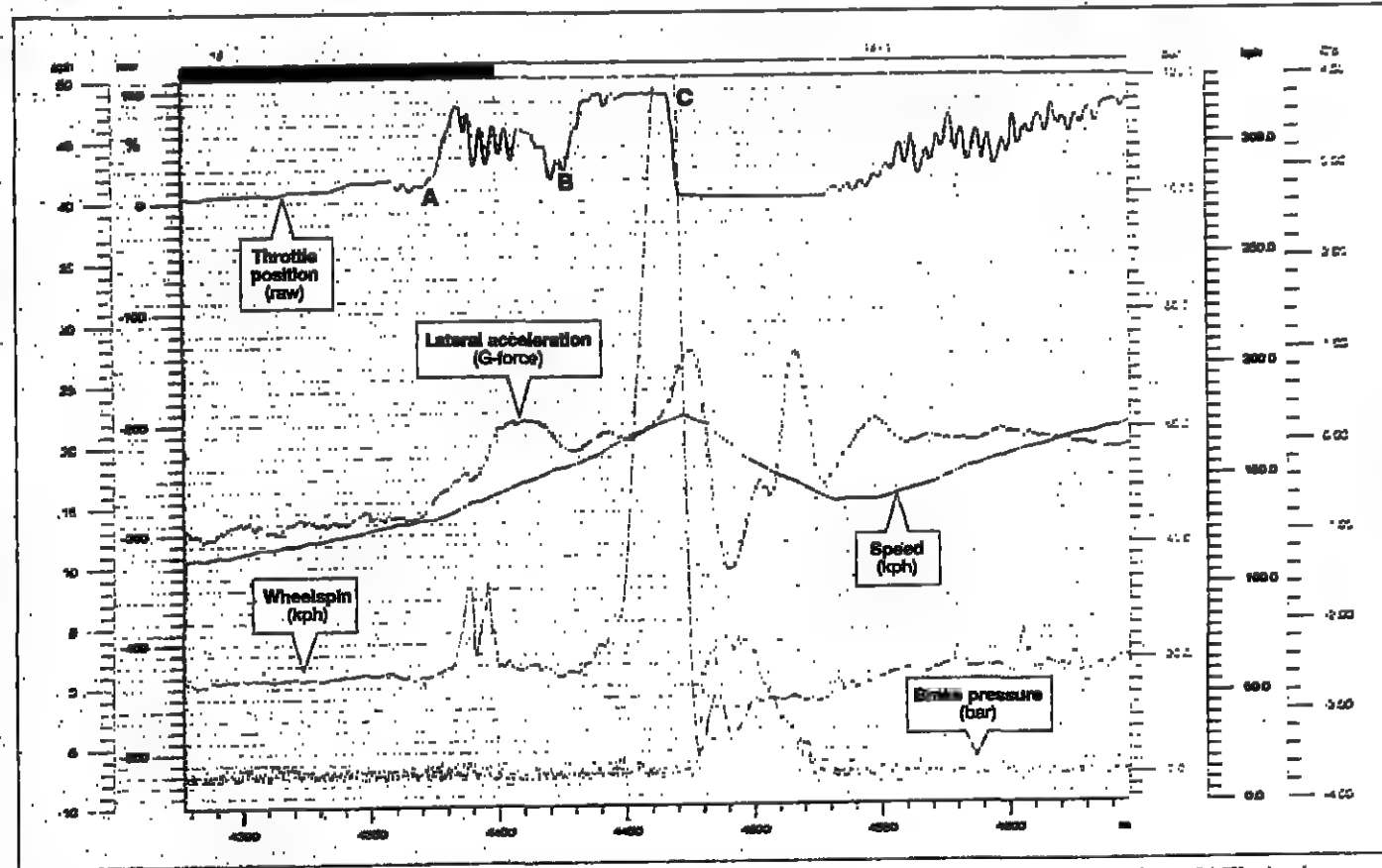
"You've got him worried already," laughed managing director and technical boffin Harvey Postlethwaite, as he scribbled in huge letters on a sticky memo pad which was then slapped on to my Filofax. RH-UP: LH-DOWN. It referred to gear shifting with the Tyrrell's steering mounted paddles — up the box with the right hand and down with the left. "Look at that every day between now and the time you drive our car."

The day arrived. I might be roughly the same height as Salo, but there it ended. Long body and short legs meant another 4cms on the crunch straps. Long indulgence and short exercise spelled another 6cms on the lap strap. But the pedal positions felt near perfect. I would only use the clutch to leave the pits, then forget its existence. However...

What you don't need with 700bhp is rain — but it was



The Tyrrell crew prepare Dodgins for a journey round the Barcelona track with the warning, "We will insure the car and you will insure yourself. If a tyre goes down and you kill yourself — tough. We are not responsible"



Graph shows throttle position (percentage), side force (Gs), speed (kph), wheelspin (kph) and brake pressure (1 bar = 14.5lbs/sq in approx). Circuit map shows area of incident

WHOOOPS... THIS IS HOW IT ALL WENT WRONG

YOU'RE NEVER alone in a Formula One car. Every move made by the driver and every effect on the car is monitored by sensors and stored in an onboard computer, writes Alan Capps. During a race, this "telemetry" is transmitted live to the pit engineers. The graph on the left is an extract from the data for Tony Dodgins's last lap and shows what happened when he momentarily lost control. Harvey Postlethwaite, Tyrrell's technical director, gave the explanation.

On the top border, green denotes the curve, white the straight. The scale at the bottom is the lap distance; our story starts at 4.280 kilometres. It spans the distance marked on the circuit map below. The top black line shows the throttle position. It is trailing close to zero as the car comes out of the corner at about 125kph (77mph), a speed denoted by the second black line.

At point A, Dodgins puts his foot down. The effect is seen on the blue line which shows the G forces on the driver:

a reading below zero is a force to the right, above to the left. From a steady level close to 1G to the right in the corner, there is a quick shift to the left.

The green line indicates wheelspin. The kph scale on the left shows the difference between the speed of rotation of the rear powered wheels and that of the front wheels. That first prod on the throttle sets the rear wheels spinning 7kph faster.

The throttle then bounces as Dodgins tries to let the car settle and a moment later, at point B, he presses the throttle to the floor. With 700bhp blasting through the rear wheels, but little adhesion, the wheelspin goes off the graph. The speed rises to a peak close to 180kph (112mph) and the blue line indicates a further shift to the left.

At point C, Dodgins lifts his foot, the right thing to do, but so violently that the wheels lock. The throttle responds instantly and the wheelspin line shows the front wheels turning faster. But the red line for brake pressure then shows him doing, in Postlethwaite's words "absolutely the wrong thing". A stab on the brake sends the car's rear end slewing to the left, then to the right. The snap is repeated before he takes his foot off everything and gingerly resumes progress along the straight. In Postlethwaite's words: "The conditions were infernal. It was a good effort to get that car back."

Continued on page 2

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Department of Transport tells thousands of centres to suspend 'cat' checks. Vaughan Freeman reports

Conflicting results bring chaos to new MoT pollution test

The new MoT test introduced last month to target emissions on three-year-old cars fitted with catalytic converters is degenerating into a chaotic mess as drivers and motoring organisations report widespread discrepancies in test results.

This week, the Department of Transport contacted 18,000 MoT testing stations telling them to temporarily suspend the emissions aspect of the test on thousands of K-registered cars. The moratorium will last from six to eight weeks while limits for the emissions test are revised after fresh talks with manufacturers.

The problem says the department is that information supplied originally by manufacturers as to the minimum emissions limits that regularly serviced cars would pass proved hopelessly optimistic. As a result thousands of cars registered for the first time on or after August 1 1992, are unexpectedly failing, even if their catalysis are in perfect order.

A spokesman said: "It is vital that motorists with K-registered

cars know that their cars must have an MoT. To drive without one is illegal and will almost certainly invalidate their insurance." He added though that cars that go through the E27 MOT and are passed without having their emissions tested will nevertheless be road legal until their next MoT next year.

The test discrepancies mean that emissions element of the MoT has been suspended for all K-reg catalytic-fitted Daihatsu, Ford, HMS Sports cars, Isuzu, Mazda RX7, Porsche, Proton, Rover, Subaru and TVR models, and for some Alfa Romeo, Aston Martin, Caterham, Fiat, Lada, Lancia and Mercedes-Benz models.

AA head of research and materials testing, John Stubbs, said: "We need this moratorium since clearly it would be unfortunate to take vehicles off the road. That is not the solution."

The AA is also concerned that the confusion over the emissions element of the MoT could undermine confidence in the whole test procedure, of which exhaust emis-

sions are only a small part. And that is not the only problem facing the new MoT, which introduced tough new emissions standards for catalytic-fitted cars individually tailored to each model and make according to manufacturer's data. There are already cases of the same car failing the test on emissions at one MoT centre only to pass it at another.

Businessman Frank Benzin was stunned when his 1.4 litre Renault 19, first registered exactly three years ago, failed its first MoT at his local Renault dealership because of poor emissions. He instantly sought a second opinion and, half an hour later, without anyone having touched the car's engine, it passed at another garage without any difficulties.

The car, with 72,000 miles on the clock, has been regularly serviced and Mr Benzin, manager of the Conifers Printing Press company in South Devon, said that when he took it for an MoT he was totally confident it would pass. For it to fail, and then pass elsewhere he said, showed that the new emis-



Frank Benzin: "I couldn't believe it when it failed. So I went to another garage within half an hour and it passed with a different readout"

sions element of the examination was in total disarray.

"I was sure the car would pass the MoT and couldn't believe it when it failed," he said. "So I went round the corner to another garage within half an hour and it passed with a completely different readout."

"Nationally a lot of people are going through the same problem, going to a garage where the emissions from their cars are being incorrectly measured, and as a result could be facing bills for a new catalytic converter of £200 to £500 and be really out of pocket."

"If motorists, like me, seek a second opinion, they could save themselves that money. The system, which is being introduced nationally, is clearly not 100 per cent accurate."

The trouble is that you have a computer telling the mechanic that the car has failed and he or she has to go on that, but computers cannot be 100 per cent accurate unless every detail of the procedure is followed precisely, and every garage must use the same technology. I am afraid that is not the case.

"I think it is outrageous, and enough is enough. It doesn't look as if those in office have done their homework on this. I am all for clean air, but my experience shows the system isn't working."

This year around 1.5 million K-registered catalytic-fitted cars registered on or after August 1 1992 will go through the new MoT, and initial estimates were that up to 20 per cent — as many as 300,000 — would fail because their catalytic converter is broken, damaged, or is otherwise not working properly. Bills would average £200-£400, but with a Rolls-Royce it could cost

as much as £1,700 for a replacement catalyst unit.

The Retail Motor Industry Federation's own estimation is that the failure rate because of emissions for cat-fitted cars will be between 16 and 20 per cent, and that 150,000 motorists will need replacement converters and another 150,000 will need remedial work.

Catalysts remove approximately 90 per cent of the three worst exhaust pollutants — carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides, which are major contributors to acid rain and smog.

Motor racing, past, present and future

● PAUL FRERE is one of the sages of motor sport. He won Le Mans in 1960 in a Ferrari with fellow-Belgian Olivier Gendebien. After competing in sports and Formula One racing for Ferrari, Aston Martin, Porsche and Cooper he wrote one of the first text books on competition driving. He has been in the business of writing about cars ever

since, his enthusiasm undimmed at the age of 79. As the Formula One circus prepares for a new season that starts in Melbourne on March 10, he talks to Peter Miller about World Champion Michael Schumacher's move to Ferrari, Damon Hill's driving style and other topics. His tip for the driver's championship: Schumacher again.

Q: Can Schumacher do a hat-trick in 1996?

A: There might be reliability problems early on with a brand new Ferrari and engine. But by mid-season I expect the car to be fully raceworthy. He will have to win several races after Montreal to clinch the title.

Q: Will you compare Schumacher with Ayrton Senna?

A: Entirely different characters, but both very professional and with their lives utterly concentrated on motor racing. That combination produces world champions.

Q: How will Eddie Irvine relate with Schumacher at Ferrari?

A: Again, two opposing personalities — the dedicated champion paired with a more relaxed Ulsterman with numerous interests outside racing. Irvine will learn from Schumacher's ability to analyse the car's performance accurately and provide the specific information needed to set up his car for maximum efficiency.

Q: Is Damon Hill an artisan-type driver like his father, Graham?

A: Yes, Graham and Damon are identical drivers. Damon is not as naturally gifted as Michael, but, thanks to his concentration and will to win he is a top class driver. I don't think he got the same help from his team as Schumacher. Benetton trusted Schumacher's judgment utterly. If he pitted in practice, they listened to his suggestions. In my opinion, the Williams people

didn't have the same faith in Damon.

Q: Hill sometimes misjudges his overtaking and puts himself in a compromising situation. Is this a flaw?

A: Yes, definitely. Overtaking has become more difficult and drivers who can overtake at the right time and place have a distinct advantage.

Q: What about Jean Alesi? Is he too much of a charger?

A: He certainly is a charger — an acrobat at the wheel — but so was Tazio Nuvolari. Nuvolari, however, was an exception and most world champions are smooth drivers. I think Alesi can expect fierce opposition from his Benetton team-mate, Berger, who is very experienced and can be very fast if he thinks he has a race-winning car.

Q: Is sponsorship ruining Formula One? Are the top teams too rich?

A: Sponsorship could be a good thing, but unfortunately only the top teams get big money. They also get about 70 engines per season free. The "also-runs of pit-alley", who struggle for sponsorship and must buy their own engines, never get a chance. This year, Ferrari could be the dark horse. It all depends on how quickly the new car can be sorted. Incidentally, Ferrari is no longer as Italian as most people think. The overall project is in the hands of an Englishman, John Barnard; the engine designer is Osamu Goto, a Japanese formerly with Honda; and team manager is a Frenchman, Jean Todt.

Q: Can the average continental still afford to watch expensive Formula One?

A: I don't think that Foca — the Formula One Constructors' Association — cares enough about encouraging race fans. Motor racing cannot survive through television audiences alone. It needs a live, enthusiastic crowd watching thrilling racing — because then it becomes real show business.

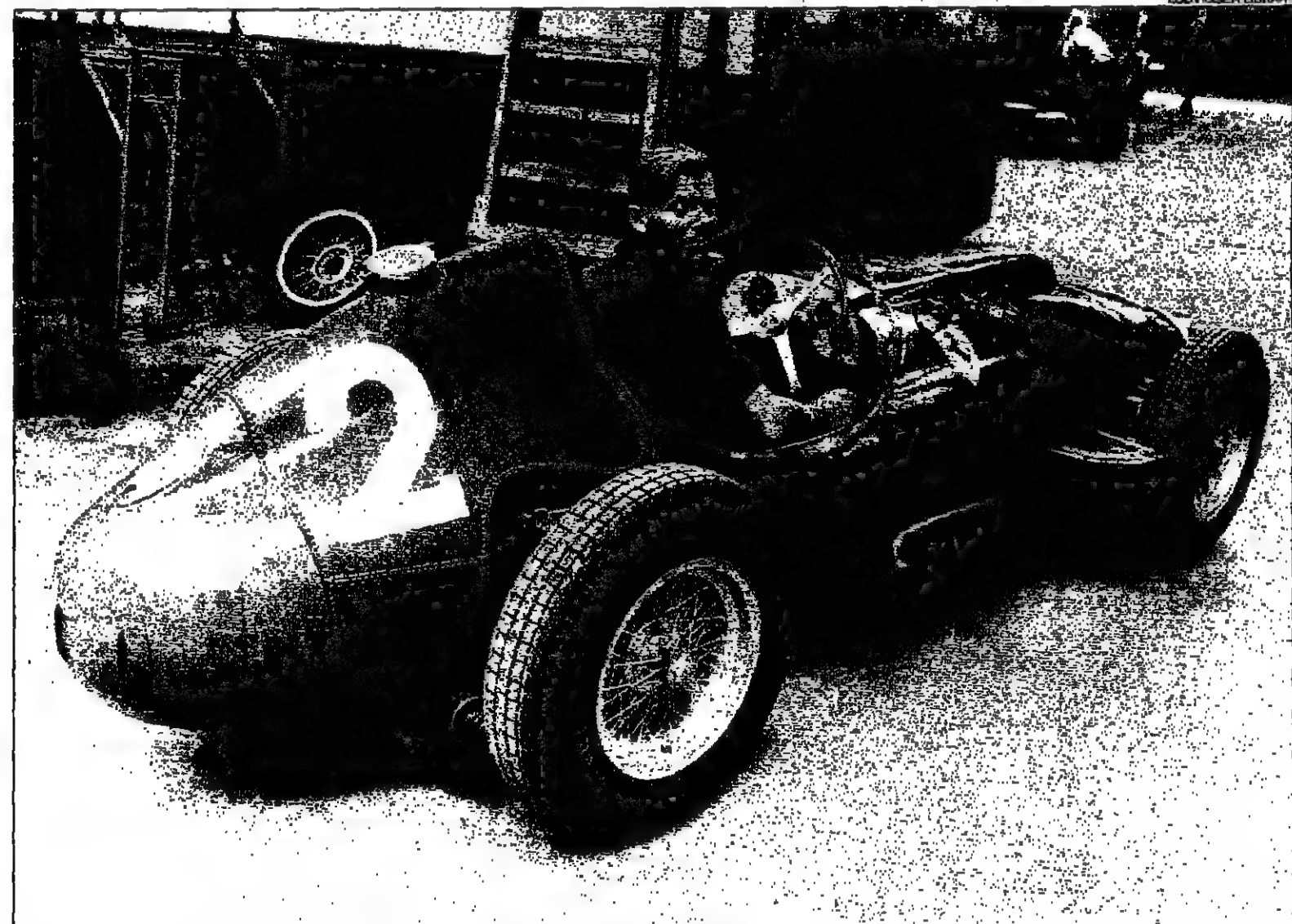
Q: Are some drivers contributing sponsorship money and not being chosen on merit?

A: Yes, this is a major problem. Formula One has two types of driver — those who are paid huge money for driving a car and those who inject considerable sums of money into the team kitty, just to get a drive. Their money often only lasts for a few grands prix, when they are replaced by another driver with sponsorship. So, when considering the also-runs, it doesn't follow that the better driver gets chosen.

Q: But didn't Colin Chapman of Team Lotus often enter a third car for a "national" driver 30 years ago? Weren't they "rent-a-drivers"?

A: Not exactly. In those days, the automobile club organising the grand prix would often pay considerable starting money for a local driver to attract the crowds. Today, it is all in the hands of Foca and a "super" licence is needed before any driver may enter Formula One.

Q: Are drivers like Schumacher really worth \$25 million for 17 races?



Paul Frere in his racing days: "The sport cannot survive through television audiences alone. It needs a live crowd — then it becomes real show business"

A: It is entirely proportionate. If the sponsor considers the publicity from having its name on a winning car is worth the money the driver gets to achieve it, then that driver is worth the money paid. It might be argued that a research scientist who discovers a miracle cure for AIDS, for example, is a pauper in comparison to Mr Schumacher or

Mr Hill — but that is the harsh irony of life.

Q: Are data acquisition systems (telemetry) preventing good test drivers emerging?

A: No, both are vital. On-board computers constantly read every aspect of a car's performance and relay it back to another computer in the pits. When a driver comes in to

the pits and reports personally, his engineer can quickly see where performance may be improved. It is also a vital safety factor, as a driver on the track can be given advance warning of a deflating tyre before a possible accident.

Q: Foca has made pit-stops mandatory. Are too many crews at risk?

A: Definitely! In the 1950s, only two mechanics were allowed on the track and they did everything at a pit-stop — refuelling, oil, change tyres — while the team manager briefed his driver. If more than two mechanics worked on the car, it was immediately disqualified. Now the wealthy teams have at least 20 track personnel at every stop. This

causes severe overcrowding in the pit-road with the real risk of crew members being run over or trapped in an inferno of blazing fuel.

Q: Who were your favourite drivers?

A: Without doubt, my top three would be Stirling Moss, Juan Manuel Fangio and Alberto Ascari.



Advice: Tony Dodgins, left, with Harvey Postlethwaite

"I give it full throttle. The crew run for cover"

Continued from Page 1
tipping down. Tough. The track time was non-negotiable. It was now or never.

Cocooned low in the cockpit. I flick down the ignition switch and the Yamaha engineers fire it up from behind my shoulders. The external starter motor is plugged in and an air bottle is used to charge the pneumatic valves as an extra safety measure. There is none of the gut-wrenching vibrations you expect. The Yamaha, in fact, feels quite removed.

Time to go. I arm the gearbox electronics via a three-position switch on the right of the cockpit, depress the clutch and flick the right-hand gear paddle to select first. You need 3000rpm plus to prevent a stall and the pit apron glitters. Avoiding potential embarrassment, the mechanics push the car out and point it in the right direction. I determine not to

jerk to an embarrassing standstill, discover there is more clutch travel than I imagine. Ends the biting point and lurch away down the lane. I'm driving a Formula One car!

PLUMES of spray fan from the front tyres. The steering is direct, kart-like, but not heavy. That, though, is probably because I'm not going quickly enough to load it up. Down the hill into the slowest hairpin, my head is jolted by bumps, which in the road car hadn't even existed. Even on the over-run, with no throttle, the engine tries to push the tail out.

The run down into the Wurth chicane provides the first opportunity to get hard on the throttle. Trouble is, as the road kinks left a stream of standing water runs across the track. Even the likes of Senna and Prost have spun in a straight line in such condi-

tions, so I back off, turn into Wurth with practically no speed... and the thing swaps ends instantly.

Time to radio in: "Don't worry, I haven't hit anything." I sit there on the grass feeling foolish while they come out with the air bottle and fire it up again. Then it's my first hill start in an F1 car. Back to the pits for a check over.

Out again, and this time I tinkle it around before coming through on to Barcelona's mile-long straight for the first time. I get on to the throttle and wait for the earth-shattering explosion of power. But it's not as dramatic as I'd thought. That's because they've programmed the electronic throttle for delayed response and somewhat less than full power. But the brakes: they are simply phenomenal, hauling the speed down as I go on them at the 200 metre board from 150mph plus. Real driv-

ers leave it later than 100 metres from 190mph!

The Wurth chicane catches me out again, this time on the exit. Another spin. Another stall. Air bottle needed again and back to the pits. I ask for a more instant throttle and systems engineer Chris Hills flicks forward the throttle mode switch on the right of the cockpit. They also give me full power. With the scheduled hour fast evaporating, it's time for my last run.

Leaving the pitlane, I instantly feel the difference. Now the shifts from the pneumatic six-speed gearbox feel even more stunning. Flick, flick. I go from cog to cog in milliseconds, up and down. I come out to the straight and give it 85 per cent throttle. How do I know that? Because the ensuing "moment" amuses the team so much that they expand it on the computer telemetry which monitors

everything the car does. It's the ultimate spy in the cab.

Instantly there is wheelspin, so I back off, figuring the car must not have been straight. Convinced it now is, I give it full throttle. Suddenly I'm in a 1.5g tail-slapper as the car snaps left-right-left-right as quickly as you can blink. The Tyrrell crew run for cover.

"THE steering inputs looked mighty interesting and the wheelspin was off the graph!" Postlethwaite explained later. "I don't know whether you knew much about it, but you did bloody well to get that back. It's not a nice feeling to lose an F1 car in the wet at 180kph. Ken had already sent for the ambulance..."

Chastened, I carry on with a suitably progressive and respectful application of right boot. Three-quarters of the way round the next lap, I spin once more, thankfully without

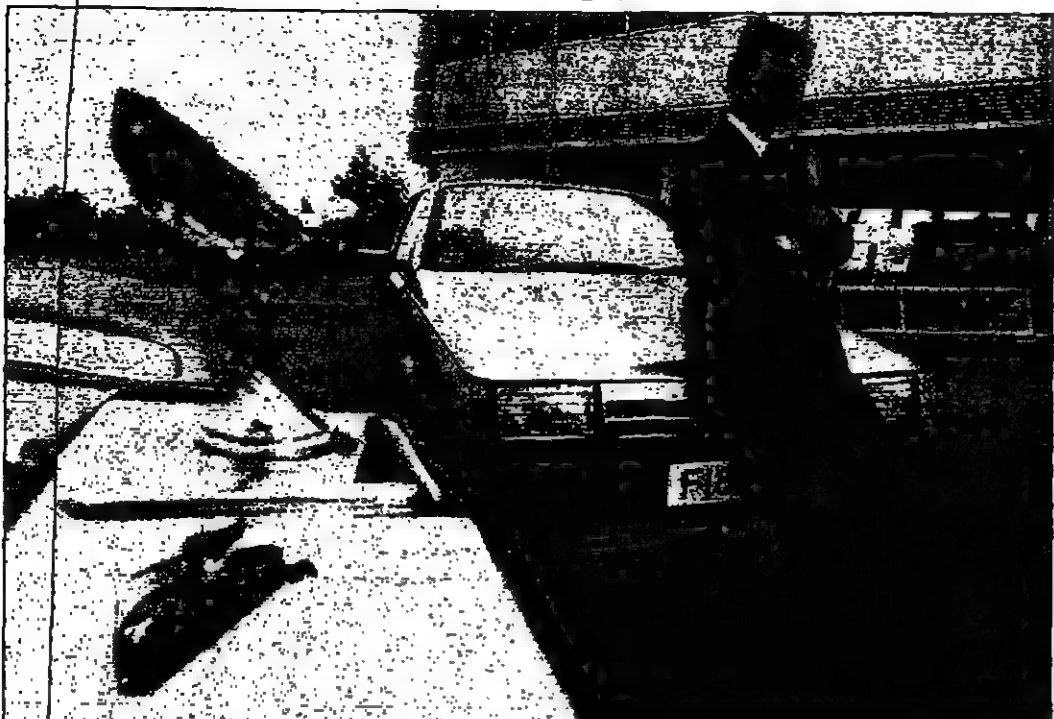
contact again, and I'm out of time. I've done two complete laps with a time for the three-mile circuit that is 30 seconds away from Tyrrell's Ukko Katayama, when he goes out in slightly drier conditions.

So, can the man in the street do it? On the basis of my efforts, not a chance. A spectacular Martin Brundle summed it up. "You weren't going to heat the tyres or brakes, or go quickly enough to generate downforce. You can spin these things at the most pathetically slow speeds and, given the conditions, you were on a hiding to nothing. Having the confidence to drive it quickly means knowing it. And how do you get to know it? It's the chicken and egg situation."

From an article in 'F1 Racing', a new monthly devoted to Grand Prix racing to be published in English and German. The first issue will be available this Friday, February 10 price £2.95.

Perry Cleveland-Peck joins our Drive in Luxury competition winner as his Fiat Tio is transformed

A £1,500 inside job adds that Rolls-Royce feel



Joining the upper classes: Roland Roberts reflects on how his car might look after the experts have finished

With the occasional light aircraft, one or two small sports cars and the occasional motorhome, the vehicle interior craftsmen at Straitsone get some odd requests. Nevertheless, a complete leather refit to an F-registered Fiat Tio was a challenge that they had to take.

At the winner of The Times Drive in Luxury competition, Roland Roberts, 40, a piano tuner, technician and motor enthusiast from Stamford, Lincolnshire, was entitled to a complete leather refit of a style and of his choice — approximately £1,500 worth of leather craftsmanship. The Times spent the day with him and his car as he toured the Straitsone Showrooms in search of his dream interior.

Straitsone of Wilmslow, Cheshire, established in 1909 as Straitsone of Leyland and now part of the giant Indragroup, is one of five franchises making up one of the largest Porsche, Ferrari, Rolls-Royce, Mazda and Bentley dealerships outside London. The company's interior division specialises in a bespoke leather upholstery service. Seven fitters and one apprentice can take a wide selection of hides and craft them into original handmade leather interiors to exact requirements. As the brochure states: "The options are limited only by your imagination."

Imagination was in great demand when Mr Roberts, wearing a stylish Rolls-Royce tie, arrived at the Straitsone workshop with his 1989 Fiat Tio 1.9 Tds. Greeted by Steve Gough, the customer sales

manager, who suggested a look at some of the completed Straitsone interiors before making any decisions, Mr Roberts was chauffeured to the Ferrari, Porsche and Rolls-Royce showroom in a Silver Shadow to study some of the leather upholstery.

On route, Steve Gough explained a little about the company's policy. "We use the finest leathers from Connolly or Bridge of Weir, we don't compromise on quality. It has taken us a long time to get our team together and they now have over 90 years of experience."

Did this experience stretch to Fiat Tio? "No, we haven't done one of those before," Steve confessed. "Usually we get Mercedes-Benz, Jaguars or BMWs whose owners want a leather interior put into their new cars — the new Rover MGs are proving to be quite popular."

At the showroom, the Times prizewinner was momentarily silenced by a collection of some of the finest thoroughbred driving machines available: a gleaming Ferrari 512 M, an F-registered Testarossa worth £60,000, a 911 turbo and £63,000 worth of brand new Porsche 911 Targa, with glass sliding roof — clearly, there was no shortage of inspiration for Mr Roberts' interior.

Deciding that a pragmatic approach was the only suitable method for discerning the needs of the posterior, Mr Roberts positioned himself behind the wheel of a recently registered black Bentley Brooklands, complete with white-walled tyres. Looking reprieve, he volunteered that the Bentley was "quite comfortable really", to which

the Straitsone team, appreciating that they were not miracle workers, appeared worried.

Still, either unsatisfied, or perhaps relishing this new-found indulgence, Mr Roberts took up the driving seat of a brand new Ferrari 456 GT, a car he describes himself as passionate about. Worth £157,000 and delivering a performance which takes it to 60mph in 5.2 seconds, the four-seater Ferrari demonstrated an example of superior motorway luxury.

Back at the workshop, a long, low, rectangular room, smelling strongly of leather and resin and home for a while to a Porsche 911, a Mercedes-Benz 220 and now Mr Roberts' Tio, headcraftsman Evan Pugh took stock of the metallic green/grey Fiat (with a Ferrari badge on the passenger wing and Mercedes C-class wheel trims) as he explained details of how the installation procedure is carried out.

First we remove the seats, door panels, headlining and dashboard," he explained. "Then we unstitch the seat covers and sew on the selected hides. We use a nylon-bonded thread and a variety of stitches — mostly a saddle or face stitch for a strong, doubled-lined seam."

"Gearsticks and steering wheels are hand-sewn with a cross-stitch. On average it takes one person a week to complete the interior of a vehicle. Door panels go on last and, if necessary, incorporate a stitched pattern in order to break up the bulk. Similarly with the headrests." The choice of hide is down to the



Before: Mr Roberts's Tio had 104,000 miles on the clock when he arrived at Straitsone. Only his imagination limited its new look



After: "Better than I ever imagined it would be, the workmanship is amazing. My car is unique and, at the very least, smells like a Rolls-Royce"

individual. Connolly leathers tend to be softer and are of the type usually found in Jaguars, Aston Martins, Rolls-Royces and Ferraris. Bridge of Weir hides have a slightly more defined grain and are found in Saabs, Volvos and, at one time, Lotus vehicles.

Outside the hide-room, the Straitsone team waited to hear Mr

Roberts' final decision. Discussing the metallic green colour of his car with tongue in cheek, he inquired into the quantity and shades of purple hides available, which raised a few eyebrows around the workshop and provoked a distant mumbled response of "must be a mate of Stevie Wonder."

In the end, Mr Roberts selected a

set of bottle green Bridge of Weir hides with ruffled seat centres, flat borders and black piping. Stitching around the armrests broke up the door panels. Green headrests with black piping finished the job. And when everything was completed, an extremely satisfied Mr Roberts said that his Fiat Tio, which he bought three years ago and now

has 104,000 miles on the clock, looked "better than I ever imagined it would be". Before its makeover it was worth about £2,600.

He added: "The standard of workmanship is amazing — they have done a really good job. My car is unique and, at the very least, it smells like a Rolls-Royce."

Straitsone of Wilmslow, 01625 532673

Trust your luck in the year 2000 as cars enter the age of green



Colour coded from left, PPG's Rainer Becher, Mike Mudge and Janis Brennan

Superstitious motorists should steer clear of the new car market in 1999. According to predictions at last week's 1999 Colour Show, green — once considered as unlucky as a broken mirror or the number 13 — will be the year's trendiest car colour.

Automotive colour styling consultant, Mike Mudge said: "Despite being traditionally thought of as unlucky, green cars have rocketed into third place in the popularity stakes, after red and blue."

The percentage of green cars in the UK has risen from 4.2 per cent in 1990 to 17 per cent. Red accounts for 25.4 per cent and blue 23.7 per cent. Even fleet buyers, who have traditionally bought white cars in bulk, are not immune to the new trend. "For years the top three car colours have been red, blue and white, but the popularity of white has been propped up by the company car market and environmentally friendly fleet managers are now looking to green," said Mudge.

The PPG Industries Colour Show, held annually in Europe, North America and the Far East, predicts car trends three years ahead and launches new colours. Chances are high that you will not have heard of PPG (Pittsburgh Plate Glass Industries), but you'll find its products on your own car. Two-thirds of the vehicles in the Western world use PPG Industries' automotive coatings; it is the largest supplier of car paint in the world.

At the 1999 Colour Show more than 100 new colours

Helen Mound checks the forecasts of the millennium's trendy shades

were on display for manufacturers from all over the world to consider using on the new cars they have planned for the next millennium. The colours on offer in the UK, US and the Far East vary because of different tastes; motorists in the Far East prefer shades of silver and grey, while most European countries have reds at the top of their list. Weather conditions also affect the choice; colours that look good in the UK can look grubby in Californian sunshine.

The show gives manufacturers a chance to plan the colour palette for their new cars, so that carpets, seat trim and interior plastics can be designed to suit predicted fashionable colours. In Italy the Lancia has picked 112 colours for its Y10 hatchback. But manufacturers sometimes make hasty choices, like the "Sahara Desert" Land Rover chose to add a high profile to the launch of its new Range Rover. The lurid gold is complex and very costly for PPG Refinish to produce in small quantities for individual paint repairs.

As well as predicting green as the colour for 1999, 44 new UK colours were launched this year, including 15 shades of green, ranging from olive to

bright apple. There are also several new browns and violets on offer, but not many blues, greys and yellows. Two new paint effects were also announced, micro mica and coloured aluminium (a metallic paint with coloured flecks in the paint).

Launching a new colour is a tricky business, Mudge, alongside European and American colleagues Rainer Becher and Janis Brennan shows the colours off using giant jelly moulds known as "speeding images" — shapes designed to accentuate the curves of a car. Other colours are on panels similar to car doors and each is displayed among photographs of the influences that helped to create them, such as women's fashion, travel destinations, plants and food.

Mudge explains how the research for each show takes more than a year: "We're already looking at the colour trends for 2000. The majority of our influences come from women's fashion, we look at magazines and fashion shows, but also interior design."

The traditional notion of space age silver fashions and grey cars is proving out-dated for the year 2000. "Currently we're seeing a move towards more natural earthy colours,

Greens and browns are in fashion for women's clothes, and as these colours tend to translate into the car industry over three or four years, we expect to see more green and brown cars in the next millennium."

In the six years Mudge has presented the Colour Show, he believes the major breakthrough has been mica paint: "It involves three-dimensional spheres which are translucent, so not only can they reflect a certain amount of light, they also let light through, allowing for much brighter colours to be developed. The micro micas will improve on that brightness."

Ultimately we're interested in developing new effects, as they allow for new colours. In the late Eighties the split between solid colours and metallics was 60/40, now it's more like 40/60, because the choice of mica metallic colours is so much wider. With the use of micro mica, we expect to see even more exciting colours being developed."

Standing out of the bright lights and general hubbub of the show, Gary Picken, UK Business Development Manager for PPG Automotive Refinish, is a little solicitous. "Once these colours and effects have been invented, the difficult part is making sure we can make them in small quantities for car dealership bodyshops. They have to be easy and affordable to repair."

No surprise, then, that under PPG's advice, Land Rover has left the Sahara Desert.

PAINT CHART

How you are the colour you drive

THE British taste for red, which accounts for more than a quarter of all cars on the road, is shared by most other European countries.

Surprisingly for such a popular shade, an analysis last year by a leading insurance company concluded that red signifies an ambitious driver who dislikes routine. In the Far East white is more popular, especially in Japan where it is a symbol of purity.

But when it comes to status, Henry Ford was right: black is the colour to be seen in if you want to appear successful or, of course, if you can afford a chauffeur. There is a price to pay, however, because it also carries a higher risk of theft.

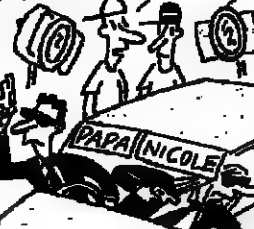
Blue is the second most popular colour. Said to indicate a conventional attitude to life, it is much favoured by current Ford drivers.

Silver is another shade favoured by the successful who want to be less discreet than those who favour black.

Striking recent additions to the colour range include orange and purple which are proving popular for the MG and a wonderful mustard for the Fiat Punto. But if you really want to be noticed then yellow is for you. The perfect shade for the show-off.

CAR TOONS

QUENTIN TARANTINO'S NEW FILM AD



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Vaughan Freeman reports on a scheme to take the pain out of being an inner-city car owner

Instant rentals on your own doorstep

Playing hunt-the-parking-space is the bane of the inner-city motorist. But the answer could lie in two "Street Fleet" pilot projects — currently being tested in Bremen, Germany — in which small fleets of cars will be on hand for rent by taking part. Local authorities will ensure that the cars have guaranteed parking spaces in inner-city areas of London's Haringey, and also in Edinburgh, where it is hoped the pilot schemes will be launched. Those taking part will be able to book the cars, provided by a rental firm, such as Hertz, and with routine servicing carried out on the spot by RAC patrols.

Gordon Stewart, Hertz Rental UK marketing manager, sees such schemes as a natural extension of existing Hertz pilots in Paris, Amsterdam and Rome, where drivers who are fed up with trying to park their own cars, instead buy booklets of vouchers entitling them to rent as and when they wish.

Transport expert John Adams, of University College London, said: "The idea is based on the fact that if you drive fewer than 10,000 kilometres a year you are probably better off renting a car when you need one than owning your own. The average car spends 95 per cent of its time parked. All that time owners are paying insurance and road tax, and incurring depreciation."

In Germany the Stadt-Auto Street Fleet scheme is quite "low tech". In Bremen the cars are parked in local streets, and near them is a wall safe with the keys inside. Members of the project have keys to the safe, and make their bookings via a local 24-hour taxi dispatcher's office.

Supporters of the schemes point out also that they reduce overall car use. Most car owners use their vehicles for even the shortest journeys based only on the cost of the fuel, ignoring the whole-life costs of running a vehicle. Adams says: "If each time one

was faced with the average cost per mile when renting a vehicle, that makes the cost of the public transport option more competitive."

The Bremen experiment now has almost 1,000 participants who have access to 48 vehicles and pay a monthly club membership charge of £10 for two people, with use of the car priced at £1.40 per hour plus 17p per kilometre to cover fuel and servicing costs.

Haringey Council transport engineer Chris Bainbridge said it was hoped that funding for their pilot could be raised from the European Community, adding: "Such a scheme is a particularly attractive idea

for a borough like ours where there is a great deal of pressure on street parking."

RAC spokesman Ed King, who has been active in promoting the Street Fleet idea, added: "Street Fleet is aimed at urban areas where there is already a good public transport infrastructure, where cars are hardly used at all during the week, but where people want a car at weekends to visit relatives, go mountain-biking in the country or get their weekly shopping."

Typical cars in a Street Fleet might include a Mini-sized town car, a family saloon, and a larger people mover such as a Renault Espace.

King added: "We would be the first to accept that this idea is not going to change the world, but it might free up parking in towns and reduce congestion, and make people think twice about whether or not they need a car."

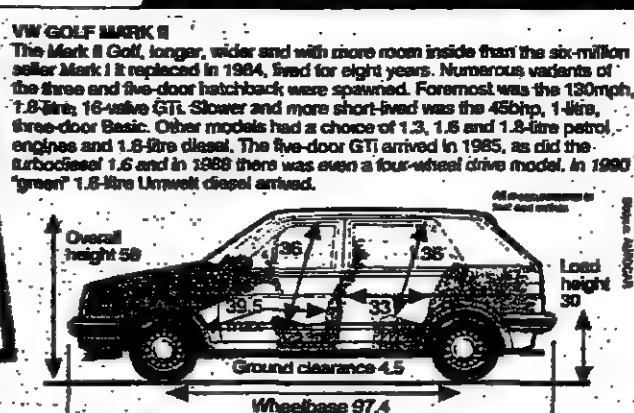
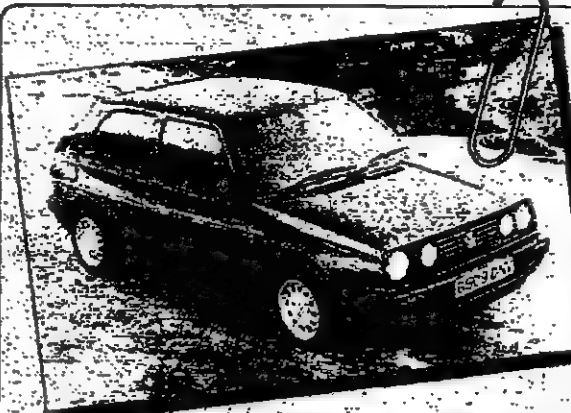
At Hertz Rental, Stewart said they would be delighted to work with any partners in an effort to make such projects work in the UK. But he sounded a note of caution, pointing out that their own research showed motorists in the UK were far more reluctant to give up their own cars and to seek alternatives than

their counterparts in Holland, France or Italy.

"We get the impression that people in the UK appreciate having their own car," he said. "The willingness to car-share, evident on the Continent, doesn't seem to have arrived here yet and motorists here don't seem comfortable with the idea of public transport."

He added though that such schemes would become more appealing if inner-city parking became even more difficult, and if motorists took a close and clear-eyed look at the true cost, per mile and per journey, of using their car.

USED CAR BRIEF



VW GOLF MARK 3
The Mark 3 replaced in 1984, lived for eight years. Numerous variants of the three and five-door hatchback were spawned. Foremost was the 120mph, 1.8-litre, 16-valve GTI. Slower and more short-lived was the 48bhp, 1-litre, three-door Basic. Other models had a choice of 1.3, 1.6 and 1.8-litre petrol engines and 1.6-litre diesel. The five-door GTI arrived in 1985, as did the turbocharged 1.6 and in 1988 there was even a four-wheel drive model. In 1990 "green" 1.8-litre Uniwelt diesel arrived.

GOOD NEWS: The Golf of the go-getting 80s was replaced by a more sophisticated car. The 1.8-litre model is a reliable and underpowered, reliable performer (Group 15 to 18 for the GTI against Group Seven for smaller engines). Golf is a reliable car.

SAD NEWS: Interior first on these models is sparse, so look for better. For lower medium sized cars, on a par with the Volvo 300 and Honda Civic, and ahead of most others including the Group 15 to 18 for the GTI against Group Seven for smaller engines.

SAFETY: The Department of Transport writes the Golf scores average for lower medium sized cars, on a par with the Volvo 300 and Honda Civic, and ahead of most others including the Group 15 to 18 for the GTI against Group Seven for smaller engines.

REPLACEMENT PARTS: (Price includes VAT); clutch assembly £200; replacement front wing £120; headlamp unit £20; front brakepads £40; indicator unit £22; engine (exchanged) £1,400.

PRICES: Expect to pay £17,050 for a 1984 1.6-litre three-door, £22,500 for a 1985 1.8-litre GTI 16-valve three-door, £24,000 for a 1990 1.8-litre GTI 16-valve three-door, £25,750 for a 1991 1.8-litre GTI five-door, and £27,250 for a 1992 GTI 16-valve five-door.

OVERALL: Look for post-1980 models with bigger bumpers and power steering on top-of-range models. Full service history for the GTI is a must. The 1.6 and 1.8-litre (non GTI) petrols, and Uniwelt turbocharged cars, make the best Golf package. Solidly built and engineered for reliable motoring, the highly-rated GTI option adds spice.

50 CARS BETWEEN £15,000 & £25,000

MODEL	Jan-96	Feb-96	Chge
Volvo 850 2.0 20v GLT Estate	18095	18150	0.30
Subaru Legacy 2.0 4 cam Estate	15195	15685	3.29
Saab 900i 16V Convertible	19150	19150	0.00
BMW 325i Auto	19150	18950	1.06
Honda Prelude 2.3 2 dr 4WS	16295	16195	0.61
Ford Granada 2.9 Scorpio V6 24V	17850	18195	2.49
Vauxhall Omega 3.0 V6 Elite 4dr Aut.	20500	21000	2.43
Nissan Patrol GR GX Diesel 5dr	19150	18995	1.27
Mitsubishi Sigma 3.0 V6 24V Auto	18895	18895	1.06
Mercedes Benz C180 Classic Auto 4dr	18095	18095	0.00
Audi 100 2.8E Quattro Saloon	17850	17959	0.59
BMW 320i 4dr Auto	17550	17295	-1.45
BMW 525i 4dr Auto	20750	20500	-1.20
Isuzu Trooper 3.2 5dr	16195	16250	0.33
Land Rover Discovery Dies.300 TDI	18150	18150	0.00
Mazda Xedos 6 2.0i V6 SE 4dr Auto	16250	16095	-0.95
Mazda MX-6	15195	15250	0.36
Mercedes Benz E220 Auto 4dr	21250	21000	-1.17
Mitsubishi Shogun V6 Sdr 2972cc	19850	19795	-0.50
Peugeot 605 V6 SIVE 4dr 24V	16095	15850	-1.52
Honda Legend 2dr Coupe Auto	25500	25500	0.00
Nissan 200 Touring Coupe 2dr 200 SX	17500	17250	-1.42
Renault Espace 2.0 RT Estate 5dr	15150	15450	1.98
Renault Safrane 3.0 RXE V6 Sdr Auto	16650	16650	0.00
Rover Sterling 800 Series Sal.4dr	16295	16295	0.00
Saab 900 2.5 V6 SE Sdr	19295	18995	-1.55
Saab 9000 CSE 2.3 Eco power Sdr	21250	20500	-3.52
Subaru Impreza Turbo 2000 Sdr Estate	15650	15650	0.00
Toyota New Camry 3.0 V6 GX 4dr Auto	17150	16995	-0.90
Toyota Landcruiser Diesel II Turbo	15950	15895	-0.34
Vauxhall Omega 2.5i V6 CDX Estate	17250	17450	1.15
Volkswagen Corrado VR6 3dr Coupe	18095	18450	1.96
Volkswagen New Golf 2.8 VR6 Sdr	15950	16250	1.88
Volvo 940 Diesel GLE Turbo 4dr	18995	19395	2.10
Audi New 80 2.8E Estate 5dr	16150	16095	-0.34
BMW 520i Touring Estate Auto	19595	19695	0.51
Lexus GS300	24250	24250	0.00
Mercedes-Benz E250 D 4dr	22250	22250	0.00
Land Rover Discovery 3.9 V8 S 5dr	17750	17895	0.30
Isuzu Trooper Diesel 3.1 Citation	19550	19550	0.00
Saab CDE 2.0i Eco power 4 dr	17250	17250	0.00
Honda New Accord 2.3i SR 4dr Auto	16150	16095	-0.34
Chrysler Jeep Cherokee 4.0 LT Auto	20500	20500	0.00
Chrysler Cherokee 4.0 LT Sdr Auto	19250	19250	0.00
Mercedes Benz C200 Elegance	20750	20750	0.00
Mercedes Benz C250 Elegance Auto	22750	22500	-1.04
Alfa Romeo 3.0 Super Lusso 4dr Auto	17750	18095	1.99

Prices rounded to estimate actual dealer discount prices. H/S = hatchback S = saloon. Prices changes based on M-reg low mileage cars. Figures supplied by CAP Motor Research.

READERS of Caravan Life have voted the diesel-powered Land Rover Discovery Tdi their best towcar for the second year running. With the V8 Discovery and the 4-litre V8 Range Rover also in the top ten, the company was clear winner in the vote for "favourite towcar manufacturer". The runner-up was Volvo and others in the top ten, in descending order, were: Vauxhall, Ford, Citroën, Rover, Mitsubishi, Toyota, Peugeot and Jeep.

Runner-up for the best towcar was the Mitsubishi Shogun 2.8 TD, followed by the Discovery V8, Vauxhall Senator 3-litre, Citroën Xantia 1.9TD and 4-litre Jeep Cherokee, Range Rover and Toyota Land Cruiser.

Peter Whymmy, Land Rover's commercial director, said: "We are delighted to be among the winners for the second year running, and it is all the more rewarding that in this case the judges are the buying public. We listen hard to our customers when they suggest improvements."

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LONDON

A40 Western Avenue, Acton. Major roadworks with a contraflow between Hilary Road in Acton and the Northern roundabout in White City.
A406 North Circular Road, Upper Edmonstone. Major roadworks continue over the Lea Valley viaduct.
A406 North Circular Road, Finchley. Major roadworks continue with various restrictions between the A1 and A1000 junctions.
A12 Eastern Avenue, Wandsworth. Construction of the M11 link road continues, with east-bound reduced to a single lane between the Redbridge roundabout and High Street.
A4 Great West Road, Chiswick. Between 9pm and 6am Monday-Thursday nights reduced to one lane each way for repairs to elevated section of the M4 above.

SOUTH-EAST

M4 Berkshire. Major roadworks and a contraflow between junctions 6 and 8/9 cause lengthy tailbacks daily.
M25 Surrey. Two sections of widening work, with lane closures and contraflows between junctions 6/8 and 9/10.
A247 Surrey. Roadworks on street between Clendon Station and Clendon Park. Long delays expected during peak times.
A509 Buckinghamshire. Major roadworks on Wellington Road in Olney, at junction with Lavendon Road.
A27 East Sussex. Major roadworks at Fife, between Selmeiston and Lewes, with temporary lights.
A249 Kent. Major works at the Stubbington roundabout west of Sittingbourne often cause lengthy hold-ups between the M2 and Kingsferry Bridge.
A36 Hampshire. Bridge repairs at Wellow, north-west of Southampton.

SOUTH-WEST

M4/M5 Avon. Work on the new second Severn crossing continues, with restrictions around the Almondsbury & Aust interchange, and also on the M5 around junction 18.
M32 Avon. Contraflow for major roadworks between junctions 1 and 2. Southbound entry slip at junction 1 also closed off-peak.
A4 Avon. Lane restrictions and temporary lights over the Newbridge Bridge, Bath.
M5 Somerset. Bridge repairs with lane closures both ways between junctions 21 and 22.
A30 Cornwall. Roadworks and a contraflow near Bolevor.
M5 Devon. Lane closures northbound between junctions 26 and 27.
A377 Devon. Roadworks continue around Eggesford, between Exeter and Barnstaple, with temporary lights.

MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA

M6 West Midlands. Major roadworks continue between junctions 5 and 6 with lane restrictions in both directions.

A6 Leicestershire. Major roadworks and contraflow at Lockington, between junction 24 of the M1 and Sawley Island.
A563 Leicestershire. Roadworks, and contraflow on Lutterthorpe Way, Leicester between the Dumbell Island and the A47 Hinckley Road junction.
A1 Nottinghamshire. Roadworks on Apley Head roundabout near Worksop cause regular peak-time delays.
A47 Norfolk. Two sets of major roadworks at Tarrington St John, and at Swaffham.
A11 Norfolk. Construction of the new Wymondham bypass continues, with lane and speed restrictions between Hethersett and Ayleborough.

NORTH

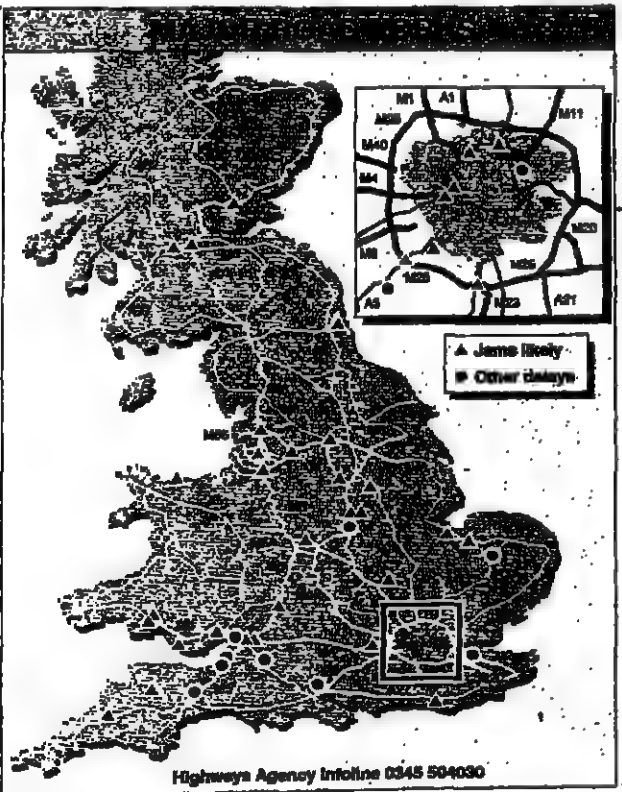
M1 West Yorkshire. Roadworks and contraflow at end of the motorway at junction 47.
M6 Cheshire. Widening work continues between junctions 20 and 21.
M6 Greater Manchester. Roadworks and lane closures between junctions 24 and 26.
M6 Lancashire. Lane closures in both directions between junctions 28 and 31 for work on the J65 extension.
A5063 Greater Manchester. Major roadworks and lane closures on Trafford Road, near the junction with Pomona Road.
A630 South Yorkshire. Major roadworks and contraflow on the Rotherway at Cawthorpe, between junction 33 of the M1 and Rotherham.
A167M Tyne and Wear. Northbound lane closures on the Newcastle Central Motorway near the Jesmond Road interchange for bridge repairs.

WALES

M4 Gwent. Widening work continues in connection with second Severn crossing between junctions 22 and 24.
A48 West Glamorgan. Construction work with lane closures on all approaches to the Wychtree roundabout at Mountain.
A483 West Glamorgan. Major roadworks and contraflow on Fabian Way, Swansea between Elba Crescent and Eastwood traffic lights.
A4229 Mid Glamorgan. Roadworks and temporary lights at junction 10 with lane closures in both directions.
A547 Gwynedd. Bridge repairs with temporary lights near A55 junction at Llandudno Junction.

SCOTLAND

M8 Strathclyde. Roadworks with lane closures in both directions between junctions 26 and 27.
A749 Strathclyde. Dalmarnock Bridge in Glasgow is closed southbound for repairs.
M90 Tayside. Major roadworks at junction 10 with lane closures in both directions.
NORTHERN IRELAND. County Tyrone. Roadworks on the Omagh Bypass at the junction with Derry Road.



Highways Agency hotline 0345 504030

NEWS IN BRIEF

Taxing question

MOTORISTS should be told exactly how much of what they pay for fuel is going into the Chancellor's pocket, say the AA and RAC. Less than one-third of the £24 billion raised in tax at the petrol pump is spent on transport. A joint campaign to highlight the facts was launched during a debate on transport policy with Jonathan Porritt, former director of Friends of the Earth, at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu yesterday. Neil Johnson, the RAC's chief executive officer, said: "Despite the fact that the majority of motorists consider the car a necessity, the Treasury continues to tax it as if it is a luxury."

Barnard honoured

JOHN BARNARD, technical director of Ferrari, who has also designed for McLaren, Lola and Benetton in a career spanning more than 25 years in motor sport, has been made a Royal Designer for Industry (RDI), a rare honour awarded by the Royal Society. His designs included the first all-carbon fibre chassis for McLaren and pioneering use of the electronic shifting gearbox by Ferrari.

Energy conservers

THE NEW BMW 5-series, to be launched in Britain in April, will be fitted with energy-saving tyres developed by Continental. The German company claims that the ContiEcoContact tyre offers 25 per cent less rolling resistance than its previous range, paving the way for major savings in fuel consumption.

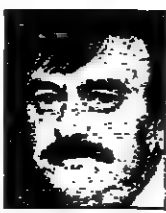
Savings for security

MORE than 50 insurance companies are now offering discounts of up to 30 per cent to motorists who fit their cars with Securitor TrekBak, the advanced protection, tracking and recovery system, which features a sophisticated immobiliser and an automatic tell-tale signal if a thief defests it.

It began when I found a hole in the exhaust; one arm and one leg (plus VAT) later, I was reporting to the station

A paper chase with the police

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

I f life from time to time imitates art, my latest escapade imitated the modern television art of Victor Meldrew. Indeed the phrase "I don't believe it" was passing from my larynx across my tongue when it turned into a resigned laugh, for the ability to see the funny side is becoming part of the standard-issue motoring kit.

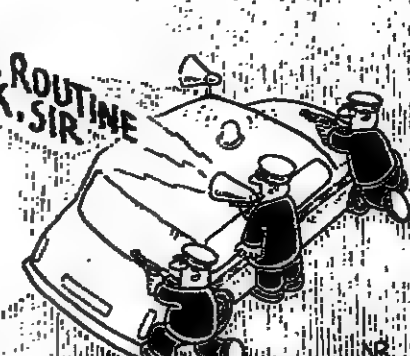
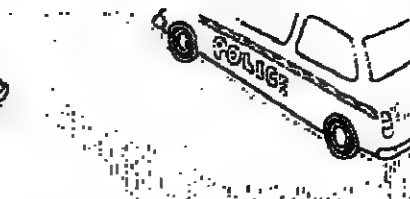
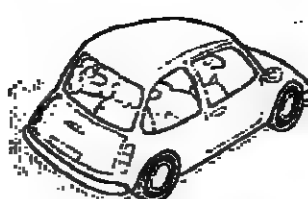
What I needed was a new exhaust. So I went to an industrial estate where people with new exhausts tend to locate themselves. I knew the front section had a hole in it, but exhaust-types can always find two more holes, each of which is in a different section.

So I needed all three bits, but the exhaust type only had bits one and three. I decided to go elsewhere. I drove away... and was pulled over by the police.

"I've stopped you for having a noisy exhaust," said the officer. "I don't believe it," I started. "Yes I know, I've just been down to get one but they didn't have all the parts, so now I'm going to..."

Pause to give the officer some

credit. He will have heard this explanation a thousand times, but his face betrayed not a hint of world-weariness. In fact he looked as if he believed me, perhaps on the basis that the truth is stranger than fiction. He then came out with the dread words "routine check". Lights, brake lights, tyres and so on. Now, when you write a column like this, which is often about the ludicrous behaviour of other people you get letters accusing you of pomposity. The



people who send those letters will enjoy the next bit.

"Your front tyres are illegal, sir". I didn't believe it. It appears that while my back was turned the authorities decreed that you had to have 1.6mm of tread as opposed to 1mm. My front tyres would have passed the old measure, but not the new one.

The police in Wiltshire have an enlightened policy. Instead of prosecuting you for having dodgy tyres, which is no guarantee that you will

get them replaced, they issue a form which has to be stamped by an MOT station to confirm the work has been done. You send it off to the police within 14 days and no more is said.

So I drove straight back to the exhaust type — he is also a tyre type — and after a bit of joshing about him ringing up the police whenever people with noisy exhausts disdain his services he fitted two tyres. Later I had the exhaust replaced, paid the bill — which came to one arm and

one leg, plus VAT — got the form stamped by an MOT station and sent it off. So that was all right.

What was not all right was the other part of the routine check: one's documents. I carry a driving licence, but not the insurance and registration document. Incidentally, people who carry photocopies of these in their cars are wasting their time: the police won't accept them.

So I had to produce the documents within seven days and discovered when I did so that the police station I nominated — in a small market town — has to deal with this procedure 3,000 times a year. I am all for people having the right documents, but police stations are pressed enough without having this tedious procedure added to their duties.

Several police officers I have spoken to would like to see the American system introduced. Over there, cars carry a disc on the windscreen which has all the relevant information: owner's name, registration document number, insurance details and so on. Thus the driver only has to carry his or her licence and in America (fly-drive tourists please note) you will certainly be prosecuted for not doing so.

As my campaign to have road tax abolished shows no sign of bearing fruit, perhaps the DoT would at least amend the disc to carry more information, thus saving motorists time and the police paperwork.

What can the matter be?

Sue Baker joins the thousands of motorists asked to bring their cars back because something's wrong

The garage service receptionist was cheerfully candid. "This is all becoming a bit of a silly nightmare for us. It has been going on for months. We keep booking cars in, but some of them need parts that we're still waiting to arrive from Germany."

I had telephoned to book in my Golf for a safety inspection, as urged by Volkswagen last week. Their letter alerted me to my car being subject to a recall, although that word was not used. VW called it a "safety action".

My car had been identified as one which, if operated over a prolonged period with an overheating cooling system, might suffer a ruptured heat exchanger. In other words, if the car had not been looked after and was consistently run with the engine too hot, the heater might one day split and cascade scalding water over my feet.

The work to avoid this alarming prospect would be carried out "without charge" — but apparently not without inconvenience. The first available appointment was two weeks away, the chatty receptionist informed me. "We're snowed under with all this."

Checking would take about an hour and a half, during which time a safety valve would be installed in the heater. But further work might be needed. Some recalled cars were found to need a new heater matrix, requiring a second, longer visit.

Because of the numbers involved — more than 200,000 cars in the UK — VW has been conducting this recall in waves, over nine months. Even so, it is not the biggest recall of the past year. That is credited to Vauxhall, with more than 600,000 Astras called in to check on a potential fire risk, caused by possible static sparking during refuelling, as well as another problem which could cause the airbag to fail to operate.

Recalls are an irksome thorn in the side of the motor industry. They are costly, time-consuming and common.

Last year there were 91 vehicle recalls, 53 of them involving cars, with buses and commercial vehicles accounting for the rest: that is a 50 per cent increase since 1980. The total number of vehicles involved in 1995 recalls was 1,190,611.

Notoriously, a small percentage of owners never respond to recall notices, even after several reminders. Although some of those vehicles may no longer be in use — perhaps long since scrapped or exported — it still leaves worryingly high numbers of cars on the roads with potentially hazardous faults.

The Society of Motor Manu-



More than 18,500 Fronteras — among 640,000 Vauxhalls recalled during 1995 — needed a faulty bonnet catch fixed



Volkswagen urged a safety check on 237,000 of its Golf models after a heat exchanger problem was discovered

facturers and Traders takes pride in the response to recalls in Britain, which it claims is among the best in the world. Under a Code of Practice established in 1979, manufacturers regularly meet a target of 90 per cent recall response. But that still leaves a significant shortfall. Based on last year's figures, it means there were potentially nearly 120,000 owners who neglected

to react to manufacturers' pleas to have their vehicles checked for known safety hazards.

Sean Wadmore, the SMMT's consumer affairs manager, says Britain's record compares well with the United States, where recall response is nearer 55 per cent.

"Manufacturers aim to achieve a 100 per cent response, but some vehicles will always slip through the net. A major problem is the failure of people to notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency when a car changes hands. The details of ownership that manufacturers obtain from the DVLA are only a snapshot, and some are inevitably wrong."

Even the most prestigious marques do not escape having to recall cars. Rolls-Royce had two instances last year. The first affected the steering linkage of just one car, the second was to check front seatbelts on 154 Bentleys.

Ford scored the highest number of recalls over the past year, with nine, ranging from a wheel nut fault on 176 Mavericks to a vacuum pump problem on 17,000 Fierras, Escorts and Mondeos.

Vauxhall, which announced its first recall of this year last weekend, topped the list for the overall number of cars affected during 1995: more than 640,000. Brian Setchell — who, as product quality

after-sales manager, is Vauxhall's man in the recall hot seat — says it is the result of becoming more proactive in identifying potential problems which could arise during a car's lifespan.

"You cannot say it is a failure to have to recall a car," he adds. "We are consistently building better vehicles, but inevitably human problems can still creep in. If a man working on 50 or 60 cars an hour starts putting a nut and bolt on the wrong way round, it very quickly affects a lot of vehicles."

The SMMT operates a recalls hotline. Ask for Consumer Affairs Department: 0171 235 7000. Top 1995 recalls were:

Vauxhall Astra: (601,131 cars) fuel pipe/airbag.
VW Golf/Jetta: (237,000) heater matrix.
Nissan Primera: (75,000) front brake hoses.
Land Rover: (55,993) seat belts.
Peugeot 306: (32,067) accelerator cable.
VW Passat/Golf: (28,128) headlamps.
Ford Escort: (23,000) rear brake cylinder.
Mercedes E-class: (22,824) passenger footrest.
Vauxhall Frontera: (18,565) bonnet catch.
Ford Fiesta/Escort/Mondeo: (17,799) vacuum pump.
Ford Mondeo: (15,755) fuel pipe.
Vauxhall Astra: (14,649) wiring harness.
Vauxhall Omega: (12,607) fuel pipe.
Ford Fiesta: (11,760) brake light.

Going too far can reduce the chances of children

Vaughan Freeman enters a fertile area

High-mileage male drivers have been given "stop, get out, shake 'em all about" advice by fertility experts in an effort to help prevent them developing problems they may experience in becoming a dad.

Sitting for hours every day at the overheated wheel of a company car or as a service engineer, or cooking gently in a lorry cab, legs clamped together, has been shown to reduce the chances of would-be fathers.

Research in France shows that the partners of men who spend hours at the wheel take up to 10 per cent longer to conceive. The Paris research concludes that this is because the testicles of drivers become unnaturally warm as they sit at the steering wheel, which can have the effect of lowering the sperm count.

Peter Bromwich of the Midland Fertility Services says high mileage driving can reduce sperm count by a few per cent. "At the margins, having semen problems is a difficulty where driving too much makes semen less good. Wives of such men, instead of getting pregnant in four months, might get pregnant in five or six months."

For drivers who are concerned, he advises them to restructure their day, and plan journeys so that they spend less time at the wheel. "If they are having to drive a lot, then every couple of hours stop the car, get out, walk around, shake their testicles up and let some cool air in."

"It was first noticed when people looked at the Teamsters' Union in the United States and found that truck drivers who did more than 25,000 miles in a year were less fertile than those who drove fewer than 25,000 miles a year."

Mr Bromwich explained that the testes work better when they are cooler and men are designed so that they "hang outside the body. Bikes are designed not to wear anything in that area, and for the testes to hang free away from the body and to keep cool."

However, Mr Bromwich stresses that alcohol and cigarettes are far more likely to reduce the efficacy of sperm, and new fertility techniques mean that even the highest-mileage drivers have a chance of fathering.

AUTOFAX by Les Evans and David Long

Four seats and an automatic. Goodies: Headrest, Sun Flares, 1000 400 0000. Price: £10,000. (0171) 235 7000.

The driving test is over. USA 15.50. Europe 10.00. 1000 400 0000. Price: £10,000.

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It resembles a lemon drop on wheels and driving it is like being in an RAF Phantom. Kevin Eason reports

Tax disc? Look, I haven't even got a windscreen

My mind was focused on the curves, the gear-change and the split-second decision that would be the difference between braking in time and a visit to the gravel trap.

There I was, dressed like a cross between an Eskimo and Michael Schumacher, ready to confront Renault's new Sport Spider, a 135mph open two-seater of such radical design that it will drop jaws all over Europe this year.

But I had other things on my mind. I mean, there are all these clever design chappies working away on a mega-budget and they come up with a car that looks like a lemon drop on wheels — and there's still nowhere to stick the tax disc. As well as no roof, there isn't a windscreen either.

Renault launched its Sport Spider this week at the Paul Ricard circuit, near Marseille. The French company has one of the most flamboyant and interesting design teams in

Europe and, apparently, a management prepared to produce vehicles which push the boundaries of taste to a seldom explored limit.

The Spider should, by all conventions, never have been built. Carmakers show concept models like it all the time at motor shows claiming they are the future — then go off and make something that looks as interesting as a milk float. Renault actually did it with the Spider, making a car quite unlike anything else.

Squat and low, the road-going version has the same 2-litre, 150 brake horse power engine that goes into the Renault Clio Williams, mounted behind two deeply uncomfortable bucket seats. The doors spring up and pull down like beetle wings to enclose the most Spartan interior in world motoring: the cabin is little more than an aluminium and composite box.

The driver faces a dashboard with stainless steel dials, showing engine revs, oil

pressure and engine temperature; speedo, clock and fuel gauge are all shown separately on a digital screen. The seat moves forward but the steel drilled pedals move up to meet the driver if needs be. There is no heater and forget radio; you could never get near hearing it even if it used the speakers from a Blur concert.

The Spider has cleverly positioned slats, which apparently deflect the air up and over the driver and passenger. Great theory, but requiring a great act of faith from your faithful test driver. I accepted the argument, but why was there an array of helmets ready to pick up before I was sent out on to public roads?

Do I really need a helmet? I asked innocently. "Ha, non, monsieur," said the engineer, "but I would not know when ze gravel hits you in ze face."

Oh, fine. I'll take the helmet then. And, Heavens to Betsy, it was needed because any speed above 60mph felt like sticking



The Renault Spider: the French company is prepared to push the boundaries of taste to a seldom explored limit

your head out of the open window of an RAF Phantom on a low level pass over Wales. But there was more to this fearless test: a spin around the Paul Ricard circuit in the competition version of the Spider. Renault plans its own races for Sport Spider owners.

the little cars uprated by another 30bhp to blast around Europe's circuits.

Renault dressed me head to foot in baggy racing overalls and helmet, driving gloves and a modicum of hope, and set me off. Now this was a motor that blasted off the grid

like a rocket, had a non-synchromesh racing gearbox and unassisted brakes — and it was being guided by a motorist with more in common with Willie Schumacher than Michael. But even I couldn't make enough high-speed mistakes to wrong-foot

the car. The slicks clung to the tarmac, I clung to the steering wheel and the men from Renault clung to their mobile phones in case everything went wrong.

At least, there was no flying gravel, but I expect that the 75 Britons who have put a £5,000

RENAULT SPORT SPIDER

Body: Open two-seater, aluminium strengthened with composite materials.
Engine: 4-cylinder, 2-litre, 16-valve, as used in Renault's Clio Williams, set amidships for balance. Delivers 150bhp at 6000rpm (180bhp racing version).
Transmission: Five-speed manual (6-speed racing version).
Performance: 0 to 62mph in 6.9 seconds (6.2 racing version). Top speed 135mph. Not as fast as some, but it feels hair-raising — literally — from driver's position inches above the ground.
Economy: Don't ask.
Equipment: Hand-adjusted wing mirrors. That's it, no radio, no heater — bring your own helmet and thermals.
Price: est £25,000.

Hugh Hunston welcomes the latest offspring born of a Swedish-Japanese-Dutch manufacturing relationship

When Volvo's dynamic duo, the S40 saloon and its hatchback-cum-estate car the V40, roll into British showrooms on May 28 the company will be moving into territory largely unexplored by the marque.

After a five-year gestation period, the Dutch-built twins are the product of a unique Euro-Japanese relationship between Volvo and Mitsubishi which also spawned the "other half's" Carisma model, within the NedCar incubator.

But the good news is that the S40 and V40 are not clones of their Japanese half-cousin, even if parallel production facilities and crucial economies of scale from shared development were central to the project.

The saloon and wagon look like Volvos, in a fresh way, feel like Volvos, and they protect their occupants both actively and passively in time-honoured fashion. Because most rivals have stolen Volvo's safety clothing the S and V40 are being pitched heavily on a combination of lifestyle and driving dynamics.

They are aimed at the upper

To Volvo: twins, both healthy

medium car sector in Europe (everything from the Ford Mondeo to Audi A4 and BMW 3 Series) boasting 3 million potential buyers. In reality, Volvo's British clientele will be restricted to 7,000 this year because of right-hand drive production restrictions at the Born factory in Holland.

Although sharing the same outline platform with the Carisma, Volvo's life preserving approach means the S and V40 have chassis strengthening and extra weight to match the structural strength of the larger 850 saloon and estate. The stiffer body shell should make for less noise and rattles, but pre-production V40s were afflicted by a squeak in the rear seatbelt mechanism. A senior engineer claimed

WD40 on the line would solve the problem.

Mounted in the now de rigueur transverse front-wheel-drive format, the petrol-powered cars use four-cylinder 1.8 and 2-litre engines producing 115 bhp and 137bhp respectively with manual five-speed and automatic gearbox alternatives. A 1.9-litre 90bhp diesel option will arrive next January. Sharp and responsive handling and road-holding characteristics place them at least on a par with Audi and BMW rivals.

Underplayed at the launch was a standard "dynamic stability system" which electronically senses adhesion through the front-driven wheels and retards the power if they lose grip or spin. In layman's terms, it shuts off one cylinder in the engine, rendering the car a three-cylinder machine until normal service is resumed via the tarmac. Combining this with across the range anti-lock brakes emphasises accident avoidance as much as crash damage limitation.

Attention to detail includes improved dipped headlamp



The S40 saloon: pitched on lifestyle and driving dynamics



The V40 hatchback: not a clone of its Japanese half-cousin

effectiveness for the crucial vision range up to 75 metres in front of the car.

These Volvos are the first in class to incorporate side mounted airbags. Happily, these protective devices do not produce a siege environment, and although the grey-trimmed interior lacks distinction it is a major improvement

on previous Volvos. Sportiness, youth appeal and vitality pepper the press blurb and testify to Volvo's avowed aim of bringing its ownership age profile down. Singles and young families are particular S and V40 target groups.

Volvo is playing for big stakes in the toughest high-volume sales arena. English-

VOLVO S40/V40

Body styles: S40 4-door saloon, V40 5-door sports estate.
Engines: 1.8 (115bhp) and 2-litre (137bhp) aluminium 16-valve petrol units.
Performance: 0-62mph 10.8 seconds (1.8-litre manual). Max speed 121mph (130mph for 2-litre).
Economy: S40 1.8-litre manual: urban cycle, 27.4mpg; constant 56mpg, 47.9mpg; constant 75mpg, 39.2mpg. V40 2-litre auto: 23.2mpg, 40.4mpg; 33.2mpg.
Price: £14,000-£20,000.

DEAD END

What led to Jaguar's little local difficulties

Q I thought that British car exports were thriving. Why has Jaguar laid off a third of its workforce?

A The motor industry is subject to some strange variations at the moment. British factories sent 744,508 cars to export markets last year, a 20 per cent increase on the previous year and more than 48 per cent of total production. More than 1.5 million cars were made here, the best figure for 21 years.

Q And I thought I'd read about Jaguar's out-selling Ferraris in Italy.

A Jaguar sales throughout Europe last year were nearly 60 per cent higher than in 1994 at 7,230 against 4,633. In Italy the company sold 1,075 cars — twice as many as Ferrari sold.

Q So why has the company told 2,200 workers to go home for a week?

A While Europe is important, Jaguar's biggest ex-

port market is in the United States. Sales there were up 18 per cent last year, but last month they showed a severe slow-down. It seems that much talked about "feel-good" factor is taking even longer to show in the US than here.

Q But I thought that after August, when the registration letter changes, January was the best month for car sales.

A Correct again, but on that basis 1996 doesn't look very promising. New registrations here in January were up just 0.3 per cent at 191,761. Imports took a 60.87 per cent share of the market.

Q So is the outlook for Jaguar gloomy?

A Not entirely. The real moment of truth will come at the Geneva Motor Show in March when Jaguar unveils its new XK8 sports car, grandchild of the E-type. If it succeeds like its predecessors, the Big Cat will be Top Cat again.



THE NEW MAZDA 626

(mazda) > (the rest)

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BOOKS

13

9

NEW IN PAPERBACK



Armstrong: exploring the origins of Western misogyny

■ THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO WOMAN

By Karen Armstrong

Fount, £8.99

ARMSTRONG, one-time nun-turned-teacher and full-time writer, is also the author of the best-selling *A History of God*. This work, first published in 1986, is a strongly worded and fascinating exploration of Christian neuroses and the origins of Western misogyny.

While never elevating other cultures at the expense of the West, one of her main points is that while Judaism and Islam are in many ways chauvinistic and repressive towards women, they do not preach sexual disgust the way Christianity does. In the first centuries after Christ, the Christian message was

mostly egalitarian. Gradually it was reinterpreted until the high-handed pronouncements on the status of women by St Paul became hysterical denunciations of female sexuality by the likes of St Jerome. The latter so reveals in his own disgust that he seems a forerunner of the Victorians: the let's take another look at this just to remind ourselves how disgusting it really is! school of hypocrisy.

Armstrong examines the witch, the virgin, the martyr and the mystic: the different ways women are pigeon-holed in order to be controlled, all the time relating her theories to the way we behave today, both consciously and unconsciously. An extremely enlightening if depressing read.



■ LOUIS MACNEICE

By Jon MacNeice

Faber, £12.99

IN A LETTER to an Oxford friend in 1929 MacNeice described himself as "in some strange way hollow": a statement of unhappiness that echoed the Zeitgeist. It is hard to think of him now without the other members of that 1930s triumvirate, Auden and Spender, or to free him from nostalgic associations with the wartime BBC. Jon MacNeice's originality and brings the charm of an Irishman alive — clever, ironic, totally irredeemably heterosexual" (as Anthony Blunt called him) and ultimately sad.

■ GOOD BENITO

By Alan Lightman

Sceptre, £5.99

LIGHTMAN, besides being a professor of science, is a

fine writer of fiction. His delicate second novel tenderly charts the life of Dr Bennett Lang, a physicist. The story interweaves memories of Lang's childhood, a world of fantastical yet functional inventions, with his professional arrival at a Baltimore University where the Dean rapidly enlists him to prize years of unpublished theorems out of the department's reclusive genius. Lightman gives exhilarating insights into the scientific mind. His prose, in observing the phenomena of daily existence, is sensitive and dusted with magic realism.

■ LET THE DEAD BURY THEIR DEAD

By Randall Kenan

Abacus, £6.99

SET in the close-knit, superstitious North Carolina farming community of Tins Creek, these 12 interwoven stories conjure up an elemental world in which the stark realities of poverty, racial tension and sexual betrayal are shot through with visions and fantasies. A place of golden cornfields and rocking chairs, Tins Creek is also the haunt of ghosts and angels — the spectres of lost loves, past crimes and disappointed dreams. Kenan writes with infinite compassion and lays bare the hearts and minds of his characters.

■ EMPTY CRADLES

By Margaret Humphreys

Corgi, £6.99

IF SOMEONE told you she was put on a boat to Australia, alone, at the age of four, you too might not believe it. For Margaret Humphreys, future founder of the Child Migrants Trust, this was only the first in a tidal wave of testimonies through which she came to understand and reveal the anguish of children — many told their parents were dead — who were shipped off to the British colonies, often to face physical and sexual abuse. A shocking tale of social engineering gone wrong, this is also an inspiring account of tireless commitment in the face of sloth and vested interest — and of unlimited compassion for its pawns.

Contributors: Tania Glyde, Hazel Leslie, Kate Bassett, Nicki Household, Alison Burns

On the seedy side of sex

The real war of the sexes is fought on a microscopic scale, Ginny Dougary finds

■ SPERM WARS: Infidelity, sexual conflict and other bedroom battles

By Robin Baker

Fourth Estate, £7.99

be seider, in theory, than sex itself? But *Sperm Wars*, like the pornography the author is so eager to distance himself from, not only takes the poetry out of love, it even takes the lyricism out of lust.

This book seeks to popularise the biological research conducted by Dr Robin Baker, the author, and Dr Mark Bellis, a former colleague of Baker at Manchester University.

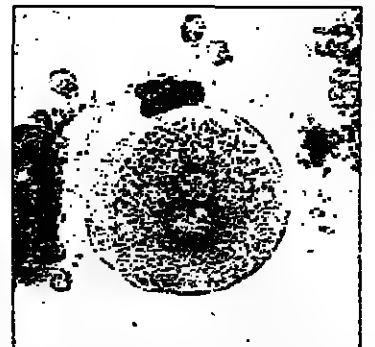
Like its scarcely less spicy-sounding scientific precursor, *Human Sperm Competition: copulation, masturbation and infidelity*, *Sperm Wars* aims to tell you everything you need to know about sperm. And much more.

There is nothing startling about its thesis that men are genetically programmed to conquer and women to breed. What is new is the quality and quantity of information on sperm (shape, size, character, motive, purpose), cervical mucus and the mysteries of the damp patch; all of which is intended to show that every sexual act — from masturbation to rape — is

predicated on the male's unconscious desire to knock his rival's more weedy sperm for six, and the female's complementary desire to collect the finest grade sperm available.

Much of the information in the first section of the book is riveting. (I had no idea that my cervix was quite so crafty or ingenious.) And the author certainly has a talent for making the mechanics of reproduction accessible: his image of the penis as a thrusting vacuum cleaner is quite unforgettable. But there is only so much one can absorb about egg-eating conquerors versus kamikaze troops without feeling like an old man in a grubby mac wanting to flick the pages to the dirty bits.

There is another problem, which the author seems to address in the



War front: fertilised human egg

section on rape. Darwinian science when applied to human beings can smack of a clinical, rather Hitlerian detachment. The woman who allows the shepherd of her children to violate her daughter and beat up her son, is "successful" because she also allows him to impregnate her with vigorous sperm. I have rarely found sex so depressing. But my body, of course, might think otherwise.

Capitalism with a human face

John Naughton on America's wealthiest ordinary Joe

OUTSIDE the City of London, most people in this country have probably never heard of Warren Buffett. In America, however, he has the status of a folk hero. This is because, despite being fabulously rich (second only to Bill Gates at current stock-market prices), he is also fantastically unpretentious. He dresses scruffily and lives in Omaha, which is closer to Des Moines than even Des Moines. He still resides in the house he bought in 1953 for \$31,500, drives his own car and drinks only Cherry Cola. The annual report of his company, Berkshire Hathaway, reads like something by Will Rogers out of J. P. Morgan. Indeed people buy a single Berkshire share (currently priced at more than \$16,000) simply to get a copy.

Buffett runs one of the biggest conglomerates in America from a modest office suite with a tiny staff and spends most of his day talking on the telephone or reading in an office which boasts neither a calculator nor a computer. His only concession to executive hubris is a (second-hand) private jet — and even that was justified by claiming that scheduled flights had become difficult because of being pestered by fellow passengers seeking stock-market tips.

For Buffett is a genius at picking shares — the smartest punter in the history of the stock market. It is one thing to make a million bucks from an astute share deal or two, quite another to outperform the Dow index year in, year out. But Buffett has been doing this for more than 40 years, during which time he has never lost money for himself or his investors. For four decades he has been spotting stocks in public companies which were underpriced rela-

■ BUFFETT: The Making of an American Capitalist

By Roger Lowenstein

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20

tive to the "real" values of those companies, buying them cheap and watching them rise. In the process he has not only enriched himself but also those investors who spotted his potential early and stuck with him. And therein lies the secret of the Buffett legend, for he is the ultimate embodiment of the American dream — a combination of Forrest Gump and Midas.

Roger Lowenstein's admiring biography of this legendary figure tells a story that is almost too good to be true — about how an earnest, quiet schoolboy with a prodigious aptitude for numbers, an astonishing confidence in his own judgment and an obsession with accumulating money grew to become an investor with an unparalleled capacity for backing long-term winners. And the strangest aspect of the story is the sheer mundanity of Buffett's formula, which is based on the idea that share price is generally a poor measure of the "underlying value" of a stock.

His trick was to ignore the day-to-day frothing of the markets and to scrutinise companies in order to identify which were properly-run businesses with growth potential; and then to buy the stock and wait for stock-market valuation to catch up with the reality. The theory is simple, but practising it has evidently been beyond the reach of Wall Street's finest. What was needed, it seems, was the discipline, patience and invincible self-confidence which still defines Middle America — and its finest son, the inimitable Warren Buffett.



Heavy weather: on the seafront at Dover during the great storm of October 1987

Raining cats and frogs

SHUDDERING in the cruel east wind, what this country really needs is a chirpy weatherman to tell us that we ain't seen nothing yet. Fortunately, there is something about British weather communicators which makes them inebriatedly cheerful at all times. Meteorology, apparently, is so satisfying a science that it brings a certain chirruping contentment to its practitioners.

■ WEIRD WEATHER

By Paul Simons

Little, Brown, £15.99

live frogs in Shepton Mallet? The Rickmansworth frost-holow (as cold as Braemar), or the Mablethorpe waterspout? Did you know that a Nasa rocket packed with meteorological equipment to study lightning was prematurely set off — by a bolt of lightning? Know the one about the seamount off Orkney that turned out to be a whirlwind? How many winds can you name which cause suicide? Simons can help.

Or do you wonder about will-o'-the-wisps, or why rain smells or whether it is true that St Elmo's fire once irradiated a Dover school football

team? Do snowflakes tinkle? And how did Second World War bomber bases disperse fog with oldrums? Did you know that San Francisco would have been discovered 200 years earlier but for the fog? Pay attention there, class — the fastest avalanche in the world was 217mph.

At first I found this book annoying. But I am British and so have succumbed totally. I shall talk of little else for weeks, for true Brits know that discussing weather, not the single European currency, is the way to happiness.

Don't go away, I was going to tell you about the effect of rainfall on the sex life of the Panamanian fungus beetle...

LIBBY PURVES

It's all very wellie

■ ANGELS ALONE

By Kate Hatfield

Corgi, £5.99

I SHALL get my grumble over with. I am bored with reading about characters who have silly, boarding-school names (Caro, Nicko, Sasha, Flavia) and bored with all that their names imply (large cold, crumbling houses and a tendency to pour large whiskies when the going gets tough). But my irritation is really with the unspoken assumption of writers and publishers that the moneyed classes make endlessly fascinating literary material for popular fiction. They do not, especially when they come with the same old clichéd relationships and attitudes.

That said, *Angels Alone* is not bad. Lavinia is married to a junior minister, Tom Medworth, who, as a keen hunter, has become a target for animal rights activists. Tom has a horrible, horsey family with a particularly overbearing mother. Lavinia's marriage to him is tired and strained. He is charming and works too hard; she feels dowdy, inadequate and angry, and hates the children being away at school. There is plenty to keep them apart and — seemingly — not much to keep them together. Then Tom disappears, shedding light on the darker aspects of their life together.

As an example of the green-wellie genre, *Angels Alone* is perfectly readable, well-constructed and mercifully unpredictable. In fact, I guessed the ending half-way through and I was wrong, which was much more fun than being right and is testimony to Kate Hatfield's abilities as a storyteller.

I found most of her characters indistinguishable from one another but I quite liked her authorial voice. Though she lacks the spark of true originality, Hatfield has true compassion for her characters, and that, at least, is more than can be said of this reader.

MARY LOUDON

The new post-Cold War villains are renegade communists, says Peter Millar

Red cowboys, dead Indians

■ LITTLE BROTHER

By David Mason

Bloomsbury, £15.99

■ WALKING BACK THE CAT

By Robert Littell

Faber, £14.99

SAS myth-making to keep the Hereford hard men happy. The book is sadly marred by a few factual inaccuracies, and Mason's protagonists have too much of Hogan's Heroes about them. But he gives us just enough hints to guess the assassination target and then pulls off a last page double

bluff to tie in tightly with the history books.

Robert Littell has chosen an altogether more exotic post-Cold War vein to mine. His villains are not the Stasi but the KGB themselves, or at least an American-based network, cut off and left in limbo by the fruits of perestroika. That is, until Moscow Centre resurrects itself in the shadowy form of a new "rezident" codenamed Prince Igor and begins ordering their "wet-work" expert, codenamed Parsifal, to murder Apaches.

Enter Finn, a Gulf War veteran with a horror of war and empathy with the Apaches, who make their living from a gambling casino in the New Mexico desert. When Finn finds out that the casino is being taken to the cleaners and Parsifal wonders why Moscow is interested in dead Indians, their interests collide.

They begin "walking back the cat", CIA slang for what John le Carré would call "taking the backbeatings". But tracing the chain of command from the bottom up reveals disturbing parallels between the reactivated Russian network and the mafia-style casino shakedown. Not just the bad guys go off the rails, they discover.

This is an extraordinary thriller: challenging, brutal yet curiously optimistic, an offbeat epic about offbeat humanity.

Enter Finn, a Gulf War

England's white, unpleasant land

■ NEVER FAR FROM NOWHERE

By Andrea Levy

Headline Review, £12.99

THIS is the story of two sisters, born in London in the 1960s, the children of Jamaican immigrants. The elder, Olive, has a much darker skin than her sister Vivien. They narrate alternate chapters. Vivien represents assimilation through education and the social mobility it brings. She is not feeling herself, she says. "When I was young, I used to look at my parents... and think how lucky this country was to have them... but even when I was young, I knew that English people hated us" — but she chooses to keep her head down, and thus escapes some of the traps of race, class and gender, exchanging the naked

racism of her council estate for the gentler racism of art college.

Olive's is a different tale. She is rebellious. She becomes trapped by poverty, sex and prejudice. She says: "My mother didn't believe in black people. She tried to believe that she was not black. I tried to explain that, now I was a grown-up, I liked being black. Being black was something to be proud of." But Olive only discovers this racial pride from a position of weakness, and its

discovery does not do her much good.

The blurb says that this book "will shake you with its raw energy". Novels about race and class that promise to do that are probably best avoided. This one, however, is much longer on intelligent restraint than it is on "raw energy". The story is well told, does not dodge complexity and rings true as an account of the fear and confusion felt by first-generation black English people 20 years ago. Above all Andrea Levy succeeds in showing how people respond to an identity imposed on them by others.

ROBERT CRAMPTON

Ungroovy kind of love

THE 1960s are high fashion again. Perhaps that explosion of youth and confidence looks even brighter now against the backdrop of recession. Nostalgia sells. The Beatles are back, and so are skinny clothes for malnourished models. But Frances Donnelly's new novel takes on the darker side of the 1960s.

The evil star of *Catch the Wind* is Kit Carson, a rock musician shooting from success to terrifying fame. His fans would like to eat him alive and on one occasion they nearly do. The portrait of Kit is vivid, believable and the best thing in a book which tells rather than shows. Kit cannot handle what his talent and charisma bring him, and his self-destructiveness is only exceeded by his ability to destroy those around him.

Catch the Wind follows three young women whose mothers were the main characters in Donnelly's first novel, *Shake Down the Stars*. Daisy, fresh from the glamour of Haight Ashbury, preaches total sexual liberation. In fact, she is deeply depressed by orgies with unappealing men and menaced by a drug scene turned sour and violent. This is a novel of survival through self-discovery and a return to certain basic values. Daisy shakes off photographers and television personalities who



Donnelly: low-key writing

■ CATCH THE WIND

By Frances Donnelly

Corgi, £5.99

see her as a symbol of swinging London and falls in love. Annie, who is a talented dress designer but has no confidence, slowly learns to trust herself. Alexis, Kit's lover, eventually flees his violence. Donnelly touches on the mixture of fear and shattered confidence that makes women stay with violent men. It takes a scene in which Kit smashes his newborn daughter's cradle and punches Alexis while she is holding the baby before Alexis can emerge from her numb passivity.

But although the events are dramatic, the writing is low-key and so *Catch the Wind* remains readable rather than absorbing. Donnelly has not yet achieved that difficult combination of strong story, tension, sparkle and pace that turns a good popular novel into a magnetic bestseller.

HELEN DUNMORE

**NEW ON CD: Sparkling *Così*;
Rachmaninov as nature intended;
Hounslow's Bluetones take wing;
Ben Webster swings with strings**

OPERA

John Higgins

■ MOZART
Così fan tutte
Fleming/von Otter/
Scarabelli/Lopardo/Bär/
Pertusi/Chamber Orchestra
of Europe/Solti
Decca 444 174-2 (3 CDs)***
WEARY, perhaps, of the de-
mands of stage directors, Sir
Georg Solti has recently
turned to concert opera. In the
spring of 1994, he took the
Chamber Orchestra of Europe
and six wisely chosen soloists
on a brief tour of *Così fan tutte*
through France and Germany
before ending with two nights
at the Festival Hall. On arrival
in London, the team was
sparkling together so well that
90 per cent of this Decca
recording is taken from the
first of that pair of
performances.



Fleming: outstanding

Here is sunlit Solti. Except
during Fiordiligi's Act II aria,
Per pietà, he adopts quicksil-
ver touches, using the lightest
of touches with his small and
expert band of players. Solti
steers well clear of the current
habit of peering into the
darker corners of *Così* and
prefers to see the Mozart-da
Ponte wagger of constancy as a
comedy of youthful indiscre-
tion. Everyone concerned will
learn to live and love another
day. The score is complete, but
with the verbal exchanges
taken at staccato speed the
opera is over in under three
hours, including some Festival
Hall applause. In the theatre,
even with cuts, it has all too
often seemed much, much
longer.

Solti's previous *Così* for
Decca was not one of his best
recordings and suffered from
an unduly staid Fiordiligi
(Lorenzari). He makes no such
mistakes this time round.
Renée Fleming begins a bit
cautiously in the role but
quickly warms up. *Per pietà*
is quite outstanding. Frank
Lopardo's Ferrando is easily
his best performance on disc:
date the honeyed mezza
voice of *Un aura amorosa*.

with each note carefully sus-
pended in position, can turn to
affronted male rage in Act II.
Ferrando and Fiordiligi are
always the stormy petrels of
the love game, while Anne
Sofie von Otter and Olaf Bär
stay ready to play the complai-
sant couple. She teases and
surrenders; he persuades and
conquers.

The beginning of Act II is
filled with the ripple of femi-
nine laughter as Despina tells
her mistresses about the real
world. Adelina Scarabelli has
a bit of edge to her tone, but
this contrasts well with the
sisters' trilling away like a
couple of lovebirds. Michele
Pertusi casts tradition aside to
offer a young and forceful Don
Alfonso. Next month he re-
opens the old Paris Opéra in
the title role of *Don Giovanni*,
a concert performance with
Solti conducting. *Giovanni*,
with some cast changes,
comes to the Festival Hall with
Solti in the autumn and the
recording engineers will be
there. On the evidence of this
witty and dashing *Così*, we
should stay tuned.

CHAMBER

Hilary Finch

■ RACHMANINOV
Sonata No 2, etc
Zoltan Kocsis
Philips 446 220-2***
JUST as, in the case of Bartók,
Zoltan Kocsis has been pitting
his own imagination and intel-
ligence to thrilling effect
against the composer's own
manuscript and piano
roll, so now he turns to
Rachmaninov. Both in his
playing and in his own accom-
panying notes, Kocsis makes a
strong case for this original
1913 version of the Sonata
No 2. Rachmaninov's 1931 re-
vision, with its numerous cuts,
reduced the work to little more
than an outline. Here is the
piece in its full rhapsodic
glory, and Kocsis has both the
technique and the intellect to
bring it off.

So deeply thought out is his
performance that he has the
freedom to unfold the music as
if it were an improvisation.
This is so vital in Rach-
maninov where, as Kocsis
himself puts it, "the work and
its interpretation are all of a
piece". Kocsis fills out this
recital with entralling perfor-
mances of six Preludes, three
Etude-Tableaux and two
Morceaux de fantaisie.

■ RACHMANINOV
Complete Songs Vol 1
Leiferkus/Rodgers/
Shelley, etc
Chandos CHAN 9405**
CHANDOS has assembled
some of Rachmaninov's finest
interpreters for a complete

NEW ON VIDEO: Paris with no heart; Audrey Hepburn on the brink of stardom; *Usual Suspects* in the clear



Scoring no points: Billy Crystal plays a smug, selfish basketball referee but fails to make the audience care about a curiously moribund love story in *Forgetting Paris*

■ FORGET PARIS
Columbia TriStar, 12, 1995
CAN Billy Crystal and Debra
Winger make their love affair stick?
Do we care? Not much, partly
because the stars never seem to be
two hearts beating as one. Why
would Winger, an airline executive,
ever contemplate bliss with Cry-
stal's smug, selfish basketball re-
feree? The Paris we see is the movie
creation: tourist traps, locals in
berets. On the brighter side, the
script's portrayal of urban angst
brings Woody Allen pleasantly to
mind. A rental release.

■ FARAWAY, SO CLOSE
Columbia, 15, 1994
WIM WENDERS'S sequel to *Wings
of Desire*. Some stretches are cap-

ivating, though you still need the
patience of Job to survive two and a
half hours of extreme whimsy,
pastiche thriller and visits from the
likes of Mikhail Gorbachev, Peter
Falk and Lou Reed. Otto Sander's
angel casts a kindly eye around the
unified city and takes on mortal
form; but the deeper he delves into
human life, the more cumbersome
Wenders's conceits grow. Ravishing
photography helps.

■ I LOVE A MAN IN UNIFORM
Tartan, 18, 1993
MILD bank clerk and part-time
actor becomes a television cop and
takes his uniform home. Out on the
streets in black leather, he finds the
power life otherwise denied him.
Canadian director David Wellings-

ton plays clever games with our
fascination with television violence
and sneaks plenty of dark humour
into the edgy scenes. Stage actor
Tom McCamus is riveting as the
hero led off the rails by his lust for
order. No masterpiece, but a strik-
ing film with a tart disposition and a
mud of its own.

■ ROMAN HOLIDAY
CIC, U, 1953
GREGORY PECK'S American
newspaperman falls for a princess
in disguise: a slim, whimsical story,
once earmarked for Frank Capra
and fastened up by director William
Wyler, who insisted on shooting in
Rome and never lets us forget it. But
it is an admirable showcase for
young Audrey Hepburn. In one

bound she leapt from British bit-
parts to Hollywood stardom and an
Oscar.

■ THE SLINGSHOT
Cinecoeur, 12, 1993
AKE SANDGREN'S oddball Swe-
dish film whisks us to Stockholm in
the 1920s, where a sensitive but
resilient child suffers school perse-
cution, family strife, and peers up
his first female friend. The film, from
an autobiographical novel, is never
boring, but Sandgren's staid brand
of image-making rubs away some of
the characters' sharp edges, and it
never matches its obvious fore-run-
ner, *My Life as a Dog*. The title
comes from a contraption the hero
makes from a little bent wire and
two condoms.

■ THE USUAL SUSPECTS
PolyGram, 18, 1995
JOHN Special Agent Chaz
Palmitre as he tries to disentangle
the threads that bind five criminals
and lead to a dockside fire and 27
dead bodies. The plot is complex but
director Bryan Singer keeps it
moving with an authority and bold
style worlds removed from the static
cleverness of his only other film,
Public Access. The action at times
burns the screen but there is room
for careful characterisations, and
the strong cast — including Kevin
Spacey, Gabriel Byrne and Stephen
Saldwin — relish their opportuni-
ties. One of the top American films
of last year. Available to rent.

GEOFF BROWN

song series whose first volume
promises much. Just as
Rachmaninov himself chose
his poets with great care, so
here each singer is sensitively
cast and responds with real
conviction to each of the songs
as they unfold in chronologi-
cal order.
Sergei Leiferkus takes

charge of the very first song,
Rachmaninov's sombre *Ler-
montov setting*. At the gates of
the holy cloister. Then, as the
recital moves on through the
early Op 4 songs, Maria
Popescu's mezzo-soprano
warms to the half-lights of
Morning. The six songs of
Op 8, with their settings of
Ukrainian and German poetry,
bring an elusive *Dream*
from Alexandre Naumenko's
mordant, slightly nasal tenor;
while Joan Rodgers offers an
anguished *Prayer*. Pianist
Howard Shelley comes into
his own in the challenging
accompaniments of the Op 14
songs, painting a pulsating
backdrop for Naumenko's
Summer Nights and Rod-
gers's *Spring Torrents*.

ORCHESTRAL

Barry Millington

■ TCHAIKOVSKY
Symphony No 4
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV
Capriccio espagnol
Saito Kinen Orchestra/
Ozawa
Philips 446 102-2***
ALTHOUGH active for only
two months of the year, the
Saito Kinen Orchestra has
carved a considerable reputa-
tion for itself in the 12 years of
its existence. Founded by Seiji
Ozawa and Kazuyoshi Aki-
yama in memory of the great
Japanese teacher Hideo Saito,
the orchestra draws on promi-
nent soloists, teachers and
other players. This is its fourth
recording under Ozawa for
Philips.

The orchestra's defining
characteristic is discipline.
When combined with Ozawa's
meticulous ear for detail —
evident too in his recording of
Tchaikovsky's Fifth with the
Berlin Philharmonic last year
— the result is the last word in
precision. Ozawa's reading of
Tchaikovsky is less demoniac
than that of, say, Kurt Sand-
erling, whose Fourth was re-
issued in the DG Originals
series last year. Nor, for better
or worse, does the Saito Kinen
Orchestra have the raw, ele-
mental quality of Sanderling's
Leningrad Philharmonic of
the 1950s. But there is no lack
of electricity here, nor of
feeling for the appropriate
style and idiom. The flowing
lines of the first movement are
sculpted with a sensitivity for
their emotional content, while



Ozawa: exhilarating sweep

the brass rings out with an
incisive edge, the Fate motif
scything thrillingly through
the texture.

The phrasing of the Andan-
tino is similarly trim and neat,
almost to a fault: the effect is
slightly prettified, where the
folk-tune contours call for
something a touch more
earthy. Yet there is a genuine
heart-rugging quality here too.
In the Finale, again, precision
is the watchword: every one of
those rushing, frenzied semi-
quavers is in place, clearly
articulated. Ozawa's pacing is
also admirable, leaving him-
self scope to sweep the coda
away to an exhilarating finish.

The coupling is Rimsky-
Korsakov's *Capriccio Espag-
nol*, in which orchestra and
conductor do full justice to the
brilliant colours and lively
Spanish rhythms for which
the piece is famous.

POP ALBUM

David Sinclair

■ THE BLUETONES
Expecting to Fly
Superior Quality
Recordings/ABM
BLUE 004***
DESPITE the scramble by the
latest wave of groups to dis-
sociate themselves from the dog-
eared Britpop tag, the
charabanc rolls on. And if the
Bluetones are not an example
of a new British band playing
fine pop music, then it is hard
to think who is.
Four earnest young men
from Hounslow who have
already been declared the
great pale hopes of 1996 on the
basis of a handful of singles,
they offer plenty of passion,
though nothing in the way of
innovation. Sticking primarily

to a retro formula of guitars,
drums and voices, their debut
album, *Expecting to Fly*, has a
comfortingly familiar sound.

On songs such as *Things
Change* and *Time Is Again*,
Adam Devlin's guitar playing
encompasses the chiming
grace of Johnny Marr and the
choppy aggression of Pete
Townshend, while singer
Mark Morris plies his tales of
romantic whimsy with a
clean-cut voice, making a
pleasing virtue out of his long,
southern-English vowels.

Disillusionment is a re-
curring theme — "I'm not the
same person I was a year
ago/You cut me deeply and
the scars still show" — but
typically, it is music that turns
a downcast mood into some-
thing uplifting.

Their fondness for pop mel-
ody, and the care with which
the songs are written and
arranged, means that they
stray, at times, a little too close
to the bland tunefulness of the
Beautiful South. But on
harder numbers, such as the
ambitious *Talking to Clarry*
and *Cut Some Rug* (imagine
the Stone Roses with a proper
singer), there is a rare bril-
liance at work.

■ 3T
Brotherhood
MJJ Music/Epic 481694**
TAJ (22), Taryll (20) and TJ
Jackson (17) are the three T's in
3T. Their Dad is Tito Jackson,
formerly of the Jackson
Five/Jacksons, which means
that their uncle is none other
than the King of Pop himself.
Membership of a show-
business dynasty undoubtedly
has its advantages. Not only
are the boys — none of whom
looks a day over 15 — signed to
Michael Jackson's MJJ label,
but he has also contributed a
new song, *Why*, to their al-
bum, *Brotherhood*.

However, the intensity of
the grooming process, which
effectively began at birth, and
the burden of expectation on
their slender shoulders is such
that any spark of youthful
innocence or spontaneity has
been rigorously excised from
this debut.

The result is a sophisticated
but rather stodgy collection of
mature soul ballads and reel-
low swingbeat grooves that
have been polished to dull
perfection. Uncle Michael
sings with the boys on *Why*, an
insipid, orchestrated ballad
that addresses such big ques-

tions as "Why does Wednes-
day come after Tuesday?", and
his involvement alone will
guarantee that this album will
sell. But their tendency to play
safe means that, despite their
obvious talent, the T's sound as
if they have been catapulted
into an early middle-age.

David Sinclair

■ OCEAN COLOUR
SCENE
The Riverboat Song
MCA MCSTD 4021***
A BAND that most observers
assumed were destined for the
scrappheap after their first
album flopped in 1992, Ocean
Colour Scene have mounted a
remarkable comeback.

Guitarist Steve Cradock
continues to hold down his
day job in Paul Weller's band,
and the revitalised Scene have
made the most of the connec-
tion, securing the services of
both Brendan Lynch, produc-
er of Weller's *Wild Wood* and
Stanley Road albums, and
Weller himself in a cameo
role, playing the organ.

But the lion's share of the



Ocean Colour Scene: return

credit for this great single
belongs to the group itself.
Tooled up with an authentic
1960s rock sound, *The River-
boat Song* boasts an insistent,
hustling rhythm whipped
along by splashes of wah-wah
guitar and a hyperactive pair
of maracas.

"I see trouble on the road,"
Simon Fowler sings in his
high, throaty voice, as neurotic
squalls of rattle and hum nip
at the heels of the tune. Packed
with energy, it is a song that
will surely set them back on
the road to greater things.

Clive Davis

■ BEN WEBSTER
Music For Loving
Verve 52774 (2 CDs)***

DOES an improviser as lush
and melodic as Ben Webster
require any help from an
orchestral arranger? In an
ideal world, he would be left to
explore *Chelsea Bridge* or
Early Autumn in the company
of an unadorned rhythm sec-
tion with, say, Harry Edison
blowing a wry obbligato.

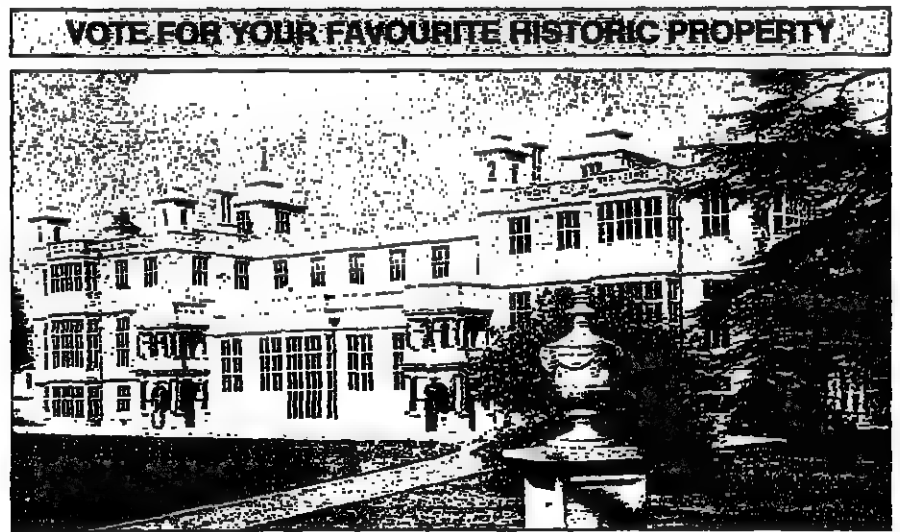
Most writing for strings
resolutely refuses to do any-
thing so inebriating as swing,
so it would be natural to
assume that drawing Web-
ster's saxophone in violin
would have unhappy conse-
quences. It isn't necessarily so,
as this assortment of mid-
1950s sessions makes plain.

If an orchestra must be
drafted in, then Ralph Burns
and Billy Strayhorn's arrange-
ments are probably the most
tasteful anyone could hope for.
Seldom obtrusive or syrupy,
they furnish subtle rhythmic
tics and figures behind Web-
ster's billowing tenor. That
said, it still comes as a relief to
reach the handful of tracks
where he is matched with just
Teddy Wilson, Ray Brown
and Jo Jones. This decidedly
off-beat double album con-
cludes with a suave orchestral
selection composed for that
other distinguished Elling-
tonian, Harry Carney.

■ FOURTH WORLD
*Encounters of the Fourth
World*

*B+W Music BWD45***
WHEN they first came to
Ronnie Scott's, many moons
ago, Aíto Moreira's band of
percussion-driven fusioners
seemed on the verge of invent-
ing a whole new Latin jazz
vocabulary. As the years went
by the tone grew more bom-
bastic, the lyrical José Neto
slowly turning into a big bad
axe-ho. By the time this live
recording was made in Am-
sterdam, almost exactly a year
ago, the hyperactivity quotient
was still extremely high, but
on the rare occasions when
Neto throttles back, you still
feel yourself in the presence of
a remarkable talent.

★ Worth hearing
★★ Worth considering
★★★ Worth buying



Audley End House, a Jacobean mansion in Essex one of 16 short-listed properties

The Times/NPI National Heritage Awards

Since the launch of the National Heritage
Awards last autumn, readers of *The Times*
have nominated more than 160 properties
which they consider to be the best in the
British Isles.

The awards, in association with pensions
specialist NPI, now moves onto the voting stage
and today we publish a voting form, right, con-
taining the 16 short-listed finalists. You can also
vote for *The Times* Family Award, by selecting
a property you consider makes a special effort
to entertain and inform adults and children.

The winning property will be presented with
a crystal trophy by Lord Inglewood, under se-
cretary of state at the Department of National
Heritage, at a gala reception in London in
April. By registering your vote, you will auto-
matically be entered into a prize draw for the
chance to attend the ceremony with a guest.

Coffee table books illustrating historic build-
ings, worth £20 each, will go to 20 runners-up.

Post the voting form to:
*The Times/NPI National
Heritage Awards*, Spere
Communications, Grampian
House, Meridian Gate, Marsh
Wall, London E14 9XT. Closing
date is Saturday, March 2, 1996.

NPI NATIONAL HERITAGE AWARDS

Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____ Day tel _____

I would like to vote for the following properties.
Please mark 1, 2 and 3 in the spaces provided.
1 being the overall winner, 2 the runner-up and
3 third place.

Audley End House	Dover Castle
Blickling Hall	Fort St. Abbey
Bolton Castle	Fountains Abbey
Brodsworth Hall	Hampton Court
Chartwell	Harewood House
Chatsworth	Hever Castle
Cotswolds	Stow-on-the-Wald
Quilston Castle	Warwick Castle

The Times Family Award
Please tick one only

Blickling Hall	Dover Castle
Bolton Castle	Fountains Abbey
Brodsworth Hall	Hampton Court
Chartwell	Hever Castle
Cotswolds	Stow-on-the-Wald
Quilston Castle	Warwick Castle



Fields of dreams become a thousand village greens

Oliver Gillie on millennium plans to establish green havens all over Britain

Elizabeth Soulsby came to Stanford in the Vale, an Oxfordshire village, by chance — and immediately fell in love. Sheep were grazing on a field in front of the church and the old manor house. It was the English rural idyll she had been searching for after spending years in Africa.

"I was struck by the beauty of the scene," says Mrs Soulsby, "and immediately felt that nothing must ever be allowed to spoil it."

She bought a house in the village, was elected to the parish council, and found that one of the first items on the agenda was how the parish could buy the field in front of the church. The asking price, then £35,000, was beyond the resources of the parish. Mrs Soulsby sought help and was referred to the Countryside Commission, which is hoping to set up a scheme with the Millennium Fund to establish 1,000 new greens in villages, towns and cities throughout the country.

Stanford in the Vale is a picture-book village with a 12th-century church and houses built of local stone — some of them thatched, others using local slate. It overlooks the Vale of White Horse, with the Downs and the ancient Ridge Way road to the south. The area is steeped in history. According to the *Wessex Chronicles*, King Alfred rode his horse in the "Western valley" — probably the valley of the

White Horse. But Stanford in the Vale is not a community of retired people wanting to preserve the old at the expense of the new. As well as traditional stone houses, there are several hundred other dwellings built by the council before and after the war, many of which are now owner-occupied. The village owns a leisure field which is used primarily by the local football club, but there is no cricket pitch.

"We are in the middle of the most beautiful countryside but there is nowhere for children to play or for old people to sit and enjoy the sunshine on a summer day," Mrs Soulsby says.

But now it looks as if the field beside the church will soon belong to the village residents. It is one of 23 "millennium greens" established by the Countryside Commission as a pilot project. The Commission hopes to obtain support from the Millennium Fund to finance 1,000 before the year 2000. The Commission is providing half of the money and looks to other sources to provide the rest. A legal agreement will be made to protect the land for future generations. If the land were to be taken over for any other purpose, such as roads or housing, equivalent land would have to be provided elsewhere in the village.

The owner of the field, Hubert Howse, has brought down his price to £27,500, and the Countryside



Top: the field in the Oxfordshire village of Stanford in the Vale that will soon belong to residents. Above: an industrial site in Dormanstown, Cleveland, will also benefit from a millennium green

Commission has agreed to provide half the cost of buying and developing the field. It will be improved by the planting of trees and a hedge. Seating will be installed at one end, where parents can wait before collecting their children from the primary school next door, and at the other end, next to the ancient manor wall, there is a raised area which might be used as a stage for plays or prize-givings.

Millennium greens will be small havens for birds, trees and hedgerow creatures, but most of all they will be havens for human beings. They are conceived as spaces where people will enjoy informal leisure

pursuits, such as kicking a ball around with their children, playing cricket, throwing frisbees or flying kites.

Many of the millennium greens will be in densely populated city areas — some dominated by industry. Areas such as Dormanstown, near Redcar, Cleveland, which is situated midway between the former Dorman Long's steelworks (now British Steel) and ICI's Wilton works. Dormanstown was built in the 1920s as a garden city — a brave attempt to make the area attractive. But either the planners lost confidence, or ran out of money, because many of the trees that were

supposed to line the wide avenue roads were never planted.

Now Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council is planning to create a millennium green on a space where old houses have been cleared. The site will be landscaped and planted with native trees, shrubs and wild flowers, which will defy the maze of pipework and chemical storage tanks a few hundred yards away. The green will provide a safe play area for children and a gateway to the proposed Cleveland community forest.

Walking south from the green at Dormanstown, a hiker crosses

farmland soon to be forest and can follow an old bridle track past Lazenby bank up to the Exton Hills, where there are views of the North Sea to the east. To the south there is open country leading to the North Yorkshire Moors — an area of wilderness stretching 25 miles to the ruins of Rievaulx Abbey in the south and Robin Hood's Bay in the east.

Whether or not millennium greens will become village greens in the legal sense will, it seems, be a matter for local people to decide. The law allows the greens to be used for agricultural shows for up to 12 days a year and, if the town or village has a right to have a market, they might also be used for stalls selling crafts.

The land for several of the millennium greens has been donated by local authorities. However, these authorities sometimes don't want areas which they may intend to develop for housing to be tied up as village greens. It took Jim Briggs and his friends in Aldwick, near Bognor Regis, West Sussex, eight years to get a piece of land owned by Arun District Council registered as a village green. The land at Aldwick was a meadow left open when surrounding land was developed for private housing in 1967. As required by the Town and Country Planning Act, the meadow was destined to become the property of the local authority.

Following administrative delays, however, it was not taken over by the council until 1987, by which time it had been used by residents for leisure purposes for 20 years.

Local people applied for the land to be recognised as a village green but were opposed by Arun Council, which wished to retain it as a realisable asset. After the first application failed, local people took advice from the Open Spaces Society and, in a second application four years later, evidence of 20 years leisure use of the meadow was accepted and it was registered as a village green.

The advantage of registration is that it confers certain rights of use for recreation which do not alter with a change of ownership, and it reduces the chances of the land being used for building development. Some 33 new greens throughout England have been registered since 1990, when it became easier because a 20-year period had elapsed since the Commons Registration Act. Although most of the planned new greens will be only a few acres in size, it reverses the trend of the past 200-300 years, which has seen common land steadily enclosed by private owners.

● *The Countryside Commission has an information pack for anyone interested in applying for funds for a millennium green. Write to: Millennium Greens, The Countryside Commission, 71 Kingsway, London WC2 8BS.*

● *Getting Greens Registered — a guide to law and procedure, £9 inc p&p, is available from the Open Spaces Society, 25a Bell Street, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 2BA.*

SAILING: If you don't know an injector from an impeller, engine lessons may save your life

Rescue for the mechanically challenged

If, like me, you go to sea to sail, to use the power of the wind and the tide, you probably regard the engine on your boat with a mixture of awe and trepidation.

Without it you can't get in and out of marinas; picking up moorings, especially in a tide-way, can be challenging; and when the wind dies and you are trying to get to work on Monday, you might just be facing one of those embarrassing calls to the office. And, crucially, engines can help to get us out of trouble.

Despite the degree to which we depend on engines, many sailors — experienced ones at that — know little about them.

You only have to ask the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Its statistics for lifeboat call-outs reveal that 34 per cent of all launches to sea and powered pleasure-craft result from simple mechanical failures — and the proportion of those call-outs is increasing every year.

As long as we pay our dues to the AA or RAC, we can get away with almost total ignorance of what is going on under our car bonnet. But in the middle of the North Sea, it's just you, your spares and your engine.

As a former dinghy sailor with a distaste for mechanical matters, I needed an introduction to the diesel on my boat, *Nutcracker*. Having spent £5,000 on a new Yanmar three-cylinder during her refit last year, and a pile more leaving it put in, I had no desire to wreck it through ignorance.

The Essex Sailing School in Jaylandsea, on the southern

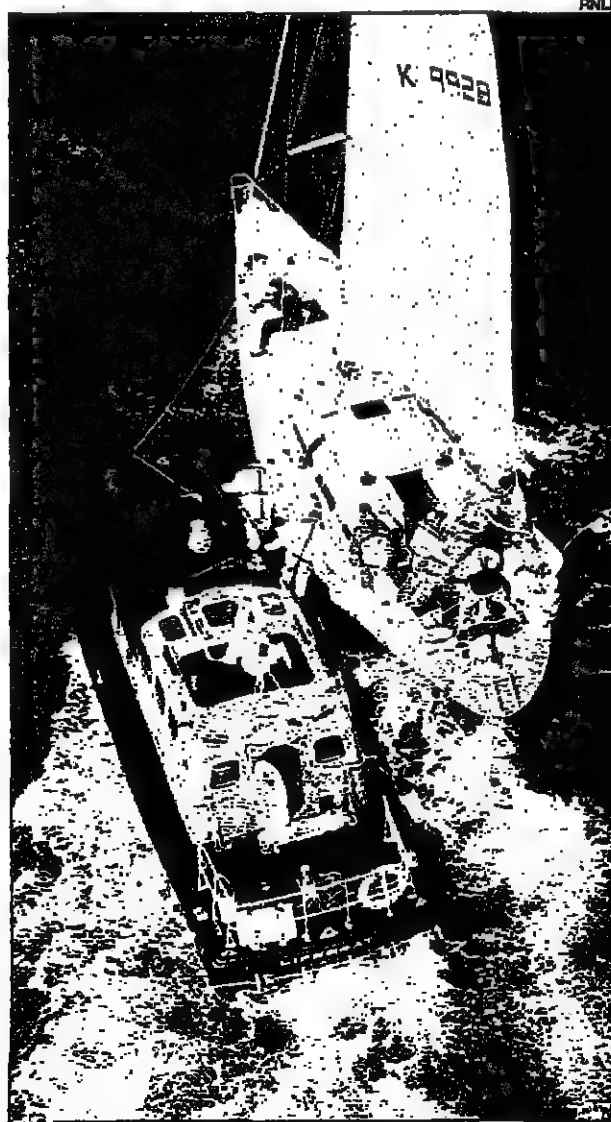
shores of the Blackwater estuary, is among many schools offering Royal Yachting Association-recognised one-day diesel courses for recreational sailors. The school runs around six courses a year, usually for about six students at a time, at £56 a head.

Mike Tyrrell, the school's principal and an engineer, believes the course is imperative for anyone embarking on the RYA's navigation and general seamanship programmes, such as the Day Skipper certificate. The aim is to give people an idea of their engine system, to avoid faults that they themselves have caused, to show which spare parts to carry and how to solve simple problems at sea — so avoiding the need to go to a workshop or to call out a lifeboat.

On my day at the school there were two other "students", Anne and Malcolm Gilding, who have owned boats for years but, like so many of us, had found a long list of reasons to put off getting to know their heat exchanger from their manifold.

It was an incident near their holiday home at Puerto Andratx in Majorca, where they keep their *Llaid* — a 21ft, double-ended traditional Spanish fishing boat — that finally persuaded them to go back to school. A young couple in a speedboat suffered engine failure within sight of land but, unable to mend it themselves, were blown offshore and spent three days at sea, suffering severe dehydration, before they were picked up by a fishing boat.

"I've always put it off," said



Many lifeboat call-outs are for simple mechanical failure

Mr Gilding as he settled down to examine the school's demonstration engine block, complete with cut-away sections for ease of access and viewing. "But I'm glad we've got round to it. All our friends laughed when I said I was taking my wife on a diesel-engine course, but I could be ill or have an accident on the boat. I think the more Anne knows, the better."

Under Mr Tyrrell's tutelage, we spent a surprisingly inter-

esting day getting to grips with the "suck, squeeze, bang, blow" cycle of the diesel engine, the mysteries of direct or indirect injection, the vital role of oil in the engine, the fuel system and how to bleed it, the cooling system and the general dos and don'ts of marine engines.

Did you know, for example, (I didn't) that diesels are best put to work immediately they are turned on, and that warming them up in neutral for 20

minutes before you leave your mooring does them more harm than good? It's when you return after sailing that it should be left to tick over for a while before you turn it off.

By the end of the day we were talking about fine filters, injectors, the gallery, impellers and the governor. We even had tricky test questions such as: "If the thermostat is stuck in the closed position, what part of the engine would overheat first?" Answer: the cylinder head.

Mrs Gilding admitted that it was a lot more fun and easier to understand than she had expected. She also found it very useful. "I've always been a little wary about the engine. I used to think in the back of my mind that if it stopped, I wouldn't really know what to do. This has given me more confidence. Serious things can go wrong, but if it's just a hose going or something simple, then we should be able to cope."

The RYA hopes that more and more people will attend the courses, not only to cut down the number of lifeboat call-outs to boats with often minor mechanical failure but to improve general standards of seamanship.

Unfortunately, though, it seems only the more conscientious types are doing the course. As John Hart, for 15 years coxswain of the Barry Lifeboat, who helped to devise the course, put it: "The most irresponsible people who need instruction are the ones who don't do the course. There's no allowing for the lunatic few whatever courses you put together or legislation you bring to bear."

EDWARD GORMAN

● For information about RYA-recognised engine courses, contact Jane Keohane at the RYA on 01703 622454. Similar courses are also provided by leading engine manufacturers, including Volvo Penta (01923 228544); Perkins (01733 582408); and Sabre (01202 893730).

Next week: the superyacht

Feather report

Beware the invasion of the berry snatchers



Waxwings catch snowflakes

yellow tip to the tail looks golden when the sun shines through it.

All the members of the flock sit quietly together in the bushes; then there is a flurry of berry-snatching, after which they all subside again. I

saw a pair sitting side by side like doves, even touching bills once. Their thin bill is distinctive, but not ear-catching. They eat snow, and have even been seen flying out to pick up a falling snowflake in the air.

In flight, their grey rumps are conspicuous. They are said to fly like starlings, but their undulations reminded me more of great spotted woodpeckers. They are still around everywhere, but on the move.

DERWENT MAY

● What's about: *Birders* — listen for the song of the chaffinch in wooded gardens and parks. *Twitchees* — a pine hunting at Halsowen, West Midlands; a long-billed dowitcher at Copperhouse Creek, Cornwall. Details from *Birdline* 0891 700222. Calls cost 50p a minute, cheap rate, 50p at all other times.

When is a shop not a shop?



Always on Page 2 and in Weekend Money

BRITAIN: The haunting landscape of the Fens; ideas for entertaining children at half term ...

Winter in waterland

Imagine a landscape so flat and featureless that even the hedges stand out. Picture the setting sun hanging in an endless sky. Then look towards the horizon to see an 11th-century cathedral seemingly floating above the fields. This is the scene as you approach Ely across the Fens. Medieval travellers met an even more dramatic sight — Ely Cathedral, the "ship of the Fens", rising out of the reeds on its island fortress.

Nowadays Ely (see island) is an isle no more and the waters that have shaped East Anglia are temporarily tamed by science. But the flat Fen landscape, with a windmill here, a church there, can still exercise a powerful hold on the imagination.

Anyone who has read Graham Swift's *Waterland* will feel echoes of it on a winter morning as the mist rises from the sodden soil.

Fenlanders once lived their lives on the water — they shot wildfowl, caught eels, dug peat and cut down reeds to build stilt houses. All that changed in the 17th century when drainage schemes rescued the Fens from the sea, creating

continues traditional Fenland practices here, cutting sedge, reed and peat and using them wherever possible. Walk around the reserve, then into the surrounding farmland to see how the area has changed since drainage.

Wicken Fen attracts a good variety of wildlife but serious bird-watchers must visit the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust's centre at Welney. A third of Europe's wild swans winter here on the Ouse Washes beside the Hundred Foot Drain, one of two parallel canals cut out in the 17th century to divert the course of the Ouse. Most are Whooper and Bewick's swans, migrants from Iceland and Russia.

From November to February you can see the swans under floodlight. At the height of winter you might see 3,000 of them. Go at dusk to watch them in flight, returning to their night-time resting-places.

But wherever you go in the Fens you are always drawn back to Ely. The city was founded in 673 AD by St Etheldreda, daughter of the East Anglian king, who received the island as a dowry. Her first husband died, her second marriage failed, and she retired to a hilltop retreat to establish an abbey on the site of today's cathedral.

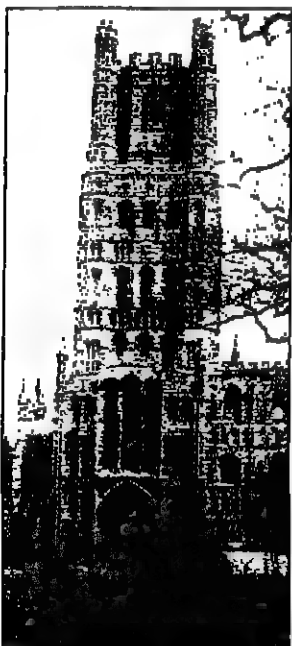
Hereafter the Wake used Ely as his last line of defence against William the Conqueror. But the Normans won, took the town, and in 1081 began building the cathedral — the main reason for visiting Ely today.

The highlight is the 14th-century octagonal lantern, 400 tons of lead and wood, providing a night-time beacon visible for miles. But I have a soft spot for the Lady Chapel, England's largest, completed by Alan of Walsingham in 1322. Beheaded saints, defaced during the Reformation, line the walls; childish images of Adam and Eve adorn the ceiling.

The cathedral contains an excellent stained glass museum, its exhibits from 1240 (the oldest glass in England) to whimsical modern pieces, all well-lit, carefully explained and in a lovely setting.

TONY KELLY

- **Where to stay:** *Lamb Hotel*, Ely (01353 663574) — double B&B, £70.
- *Black Hostelry* — medieval monks' inn in grounds of Ely Cathedral (01353 662612). Double B&B, £49.
- **Where to eat:** *Dominique's*, St Mary's Street, Ely (01353 665011) — good snack lunches plus three-course evening meals. *West-Sat* 7-9pm, £16.50. No smoking/credit cards.
- *Old Fire Engine House*, Palace Green, Ely (01353 662582) — traditional English restaurant with art gallery. Three-course meal approx £23.



The Normans started work on Ely Cathedral in 1081

England's richest area of farmland and altering the landscape for ever. But still there is a sense that nature will have the last word.

To see the Fens as they once were, visit Wicken Fen, south of Ely, England's oldest nature reserve and a rare area of undrained fenland.

Ten miles of boggy footpaths lead you alongside loods (canals which were once the area's main transport routes) and past the Fens' sole remaining wind pump to a group of "bog oaks", entombed in peat for 4,000 years until they turned up in 1980 in a nearby field. The National Trust con-

Monsters, masks and myths

LONDON

Masque in Action: Members of the Seventeenth Century Harlequin Centre re-enact the masque from the days of the Stuart court. *The Banqueting House, Whitehall* (0171-930 4179). Feb 21-24, 10am-4pm. Adults £3, children £2.

Bever Rabbit Visits Africa: More classic tales using marionettes. *Puppet Theatre Barge, Little Venice, Blomfield Road, W9* (0171-249 6879). Daily, Feb 17-25, 3pm. Adults £5.50, children £5.

Eighteenth Century London Workshop: Explore how people lived and try crafts used to make objects in the home. *Geoffrey Museum, Kingsland Road, E2* (0171-739 9893). Feb 20-23 10.30am-12.45pm and 2-4pm. Free but donations requested for materials. £5.

The Minibeasts What happens when a little girl is struck by the size of an insect? Also *Thumbelina's* puppet show for three to five-year-olds. *Polka Theatre for Children, 240 The Broadway, SW19* (0181-543 4889). Feb 8 to Apr 6. Times vary. Adults and children £6.50. *Thumbelina:* Feb 20-24. Times vary. Adults and children £3.90.

Meet A Roman Actor and his lady who will tell you about life in Roman times. *Museum of London, London Wall, EC2* (0171-400 3699). Feb 20-23, 10.30am-3pm. Adults £3.50, children £1.75. £5.

Cinema Cliché: Cartoons and other children's favourites on half-term Saturday and every weekend. *The Barbican, Silk Street, EC2* (0171-638 8991). Every Saturday, 2.30. Adults £3, children £2.50, membership £4. £5.

Drama And Crafts Workshop: Run by Stop the Clock Theatre. Includes movement, music and drama for five to seven-year-olds. *Myths, Monsters and Masks* for eight to ten-year-olds. *BAC, Lavender Hill, Battersea, SW11* (0171-223 2223). Feb 19-23. Mornings for the younger age group, afternoons for the older. £25.50 for whole week, concessions for children of unemployed students. £5.

AVON

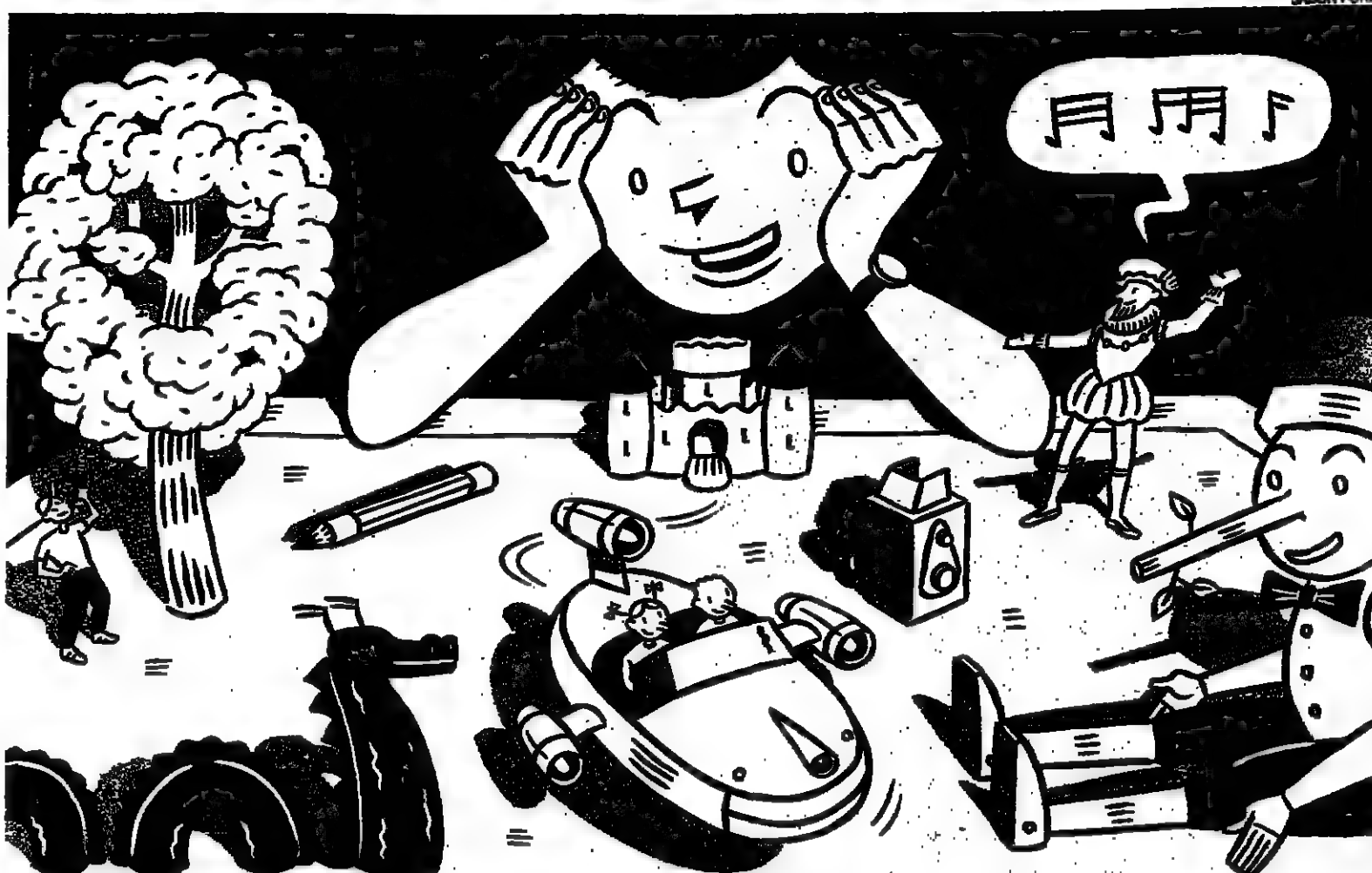
Bedding Snappers: Introduction to Black and White Photography and Printing, a two-day, non-residential workshop by the Royal Photographic Society in different venues around Bristol from February 19-20 for 11 to 16-year-olds. *Price £28.* Contact the RPS on 01225 46284. Not suitable for the disabled. See also Wiltshire for similar event.

BEDFORDSHIRE

Fantastic Fun: Arts and crafts, racket games, bounding castles and prizes suitable for seven to 14-year-olds. *Buryton Sports Centre, Mile Road, Bedford* (01234 364481). Feb 19-23, 9.30am to 4.15pm. Half-day sessions £1.60, day £3. Bring a packed lunch. £5 (but telephone first).

BERKSHIRE

More Adventures Of Noddy: Whatever will Noddy's hero get up to next? *The Heagons, Noddy's Club Centre, Reading* (01734 591591). Feb 21-24 at varying times. Adults and children from £5.50. £5.



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Kids Time: A three-day programme for five to 12-year-olds with drama, arts, crafts, parachute games, unihoc and video filming. *Stoke Mandeville Community Hall, Stoke Mandeville* (01296 625993). Feb 21-23, 8.15am-3.30pm. £10 a day or £6 half day. £5 (but ring first).

Make Totem Poles using waste material. Eight-year-olds upwards. The workshop will tour villages in the north of the county. Details of times and places (0296 555210). Feb 19-23 from 10am-3pm. £4. £5.

Youth Dance Project: Learn to dance with the Aletia Collins Dance Company whatever your ability, for 12-year-olds upwards. *Aylesbury Grammar, Walton Street* (01294 333210). Feb 19-23, 10am-4pm. £20 for the four-day course. £5.

DERBYSHIRE

Children's Week: Steam trains and farm park. *Midland Railway Centre, Butterley Station, Ripley, Derby* (01773 747674). Feb 19-23, daily 11.15am-4.15pm. Adults £7.95. Two children free with each adult. £5 (but ring first).

DORSET

Keep Busy: Roller-skating rink, dry ski slope, crazy golf, mountain bikes and more. *Purbeck Holidays, Warmwell Leisure Resort, near Weymouth* (01929 224 0500). £150 for seven nights in one-bedroom lodges, sleeping up to four. £5 (but ring first).

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Mr Men In Music Land: Musical show for two to eight-year-olds.

EVERYMAN THEATRE, REGENTS STREET, CHELTENHAM

The Old Fire Station, George Street, Oxford (01865 794400). Open daily, 10am-4pm. Adults £1.75, children £1.50. Family £6.

Pianocello: Traditional family pantomime. *The Playhouse, Beaumont, Oxford* (01865 798000). Feb 20-24. Various times. Adults from £5.50, children from £4.50. £5.

Myths and Legends Drama Workshop: Explore the world of fantasy on stage for five to 15-year-olds. *The Theatre, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire* (01493 642350). Feb 19-23 from 10am. Prices vary from £1.50 for an hour to £70 for a day. Booking advisable. £5 (but ring first).

HAMPSHIRE

Beyond The North Wind: Puppet and story-telling show. *Storybox Theatre, The Tower, Romsey Road, Winchester* (01962 867986). Feb 11, 2pm. Adults £4, children £3. £5.

Spread Your Wings: Four-day drama workshop culminating in a show for friends and family. *The Tower, Romsey Road, Winchester* (01962 867986). Feb 19-22, 2pm for 7-11 year olds. £16. £5 (but ring first).

KENT

Half-term Activities: Story-telling, dressing-up and nature trails. *Leeds Castle, Maidstone* (01622 765400). February 17-25, 10am to 3pm. Adults £7.50, children £5. Family ticket £21 (two adults and two children). £5.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Rocky Road Show: Learn about rocks, crystals and fossils. *Ulster Museum, Botanic Gardens, Stranmillis Road, Belfast* (01232 381251). Feb 18 2-4pm. Feb 19 10am-noon and 2-4pm. Free. £5.

The Courtyard Theatre: *Doagh Road, Nantmahabbey, near Belfast* (01232 848287). Feb 18, 2.30pm. Adults and children £3. £5.

OXFORDSHIRE

Curiosity: Hands-on science gallery specialising in light, colour and sound. Freeze your shadow on the shadow screen, walk into a camera and use your fingers to

point on a computer. *The Old Fire Station, George Street, Oxford* (01865 794400). Open daily, 10am-4pm. Adults £1.75, children £1.50. Family £6.

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Myths and Legends Drama Workshop: Explore the world of fantasy on stage for five to 15-year-olds. *The Theatre, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire* (01493 642350). Feb 19-23 from 10am. Prices vary from £1.50 for an hour to £70 for a day. Booking advisable. £5 (but ring first).

WILTSHIRE

Phantas Ahoj at the Deep Sea World: Pirate Exhibition with an underwater safari — walkways, pirate boat and rock pools. *Deep Sea World, North Queensferry, Fife* (01383 41880). Open Monday-Friday from 10am-4pm. Saturday and Sunday from 10am-6pm. Adults £5.50, children £3.50. Family ticket at £15.95 (for up to four children). £5.

The Official Loch Ness Monster: Exhibition with a walk-through set and giant videos of Nessie. *The Loch Ness Centre, Drumadurich, Invernesshire* (01456 450573). Open daily 10am-3.30pm. Adults £4, children £2.50. Under-sevens free. Family ticket (two adults and up to three children) £10.30. £5.

Walk The Deck of Captain Scott's ship: The Discovery, and find out more about his remarkable exploits at the turn of this century. *Discovery Point, Discovery Quay, Dundee* (01382 201245). Open daily from 10am-4pm. Adults £4, children £2.50. £5.

SURREY

Phantastic Mr Fox: Roald Dahl's tale about three nasty farmers out to get poor Mr Fox (See also Sussex below). *Harlequin Theatre, Warwick Quadrant, Redhill* (01737 765547). Feb 12-17. Times vary. Adults and children £5.50; some

children's seats are £3.50; depending on the time. £5.

SUSSEX

Festival of Trees: Learn how to spot the different types, discover what trees are used for and watch how trugs, folk-fashioned garden baskets, are made. Papermaking workshops and quizzes for five-year-olds upwards. *Drusilla Park, Ayrton, East Sussex* (01323 894569). Feb 17-25 from 10am-5pm. Adults £4.25, children £3. £5 (accompanying helpers are free).

Plait and Groove Mosaic: Clean, tack and muck out, feed the geese, pigs and chickens at these "working with animals children's workshops". Also drop-in workshops in textiles, tapestry, felt and weaving for all ages. *The Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton, Chichester* (01243 811348). Children's animal workshops will be held on Feb 22-23 from 11am to 3pm. £10 per child or £8 for two or more children from the same family. Admission free. £5 (but ring first).

Fantastic Mr Fox: Roald Dahl's "Fox versus the Farmers" children's tale. *Horsham Arts Centre, North Street, Horsham* (01403 266099). Feb 20-24 at 1pm and 4.30pm. Adults and children £3.75. £5.

WALES

Artshop: Learn how to make candles, masks, puppets, or join the "alternative orchestra" for budding musicians. Suitable for five to eight-year-olds. *Wynedda Arts Centre, Bulth, Wals, Powys* (01892 552535). Feb 19-23. Prices vary according to classes but the average morning session is £3. £5.

The Snow Queen: A family play with puppets. *Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Aberystwyth* (01970 623232). February 17 at 2.30pm. Adults and children £2.95. £5.

Mechanical Mayhem: A hands-on science exhibition. Learn how cogs work and how to weigh sand. *Maritime and Industrial Museum, Swansea* (01792 650351). Feb 2-April 28. Admission free. £5.

The Owl and the Pussycat: Play based on the traditional story and adventures in Lear's enchanting poem. *St David's Hall, The Hayes, Cardiff* (01222 884444). Feb 22 at 11am. Adults £5, children £3.50. £5.

The Michael Faraday All-Electric Show: Learn about science with tricks from the stage. *St David's Hall (see above)*. Feb 15 at 10am and 1.30pm. Children £3. £5.

WEST MIDLANDS

Rugby Day Camp Coaching: For eight to 16-year-olds. Non-residential. Held at Sutton Coldfield Rugby Football Club. *Organised by Sportscas, 130a Oxford Road, Macclesfield* (01625 688700). Feb 19-23. 169. Not suitable for the disabled.

WILTSHIRE

Introduction to Black and White Photography and Printing: Non-residential two-day course for 11 to 16-year-olds on location in Bradford-on-Avon from February 13-14 (see also Avon, above). Contact the Royal Photographic Society, The Octagon, Milton Street, Bath (01225 462841). Prior £20. Course is not suitable for the disabled.

YORKSHIRE

Jorvik Viking Festival: Learn how the Vikings made their jewellery and watch a longship regatta and ritual boat-burning ceremony. Events taking place in different parts of York. Details: 01904 642111. Feb 10-17. Most events free apart from craft gallery where jewellery is made. Adults 70p, children 30p. £5 (Some events).

Identify fossils: Learn to use a microscope, play computer zoology games and more. *Natural History Centre exhibition at Sheffield City Museum, Weston Park, Sheffield*. Suitable for seven-year-olds upwards (0114276 8588). Adults £1.50, children £1. £5.

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Answers from page 25

HAMEL

(c) A wether, from Afrikaans, Dutch *hamel*, German *hammel* a castrated ram. "Would your father have let me die rather than take a hamel from the flock of a rich, lazy Boer, who never counts his sheep?"

NANCY DAWSON

(a) A sailor's dance or song; later a nancy-boy. "Nancy Dawson is a name for a molly, an effeminate youth, apathetic, etc. The original Nancy Dawson was a noted prostitute, on whom there is a song still current among sailors."

MICROBUS

(a) A small vehicle designed to carry passengers in seats fitted as in a bus. A mongrel word created borningly from *micro* and *bus*. "This is a Volkswagen Microbus," Sophy answered. No one had told me it looked as big as a trailer and that the span from ground to floorboard was well over three feet."

KYU

(b) In Judo or Karate, the Japanese name for the grade given to the less proficient; and such a pupil. "Roger Young (Jesus), an American and 3rd kyu (learner grade) beat the Cambridge captain, a 1st dan (teacher grade) by two and a half points to nil." The whole nonsense is as barny as the Eton Wall Game.

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Fields of dreams become a thousand village greens

Oliver Gillie on millennium plans to establish green havens all over Britain

Elizabeth Soulsby came to Stanford in the Vale, an Oxfordshire village, by chance — and immediately fell in love. Sheep were grazing on a field in front of the church and the old manor house. It was the English rural idyll she had been searching for after spending years in Africa.

"I was struck by the beauty of the scene," says Mrs Soulsby, "and immediately felt that nothing must ever be allowed to spoil it."

She bought a house in the village, was elected to the parish council, and found that one of the first items on the agenda was how the parish could buy the field in front of the church. The asking price, then £35,000, was beyond the resources of the parish. Mrs Soulsby sought help and was referred to the Countryside Commission, which is hoping to set up a scheme with the Millennium Fund to establish 1,000 new greens in villages, towns and cities throughout the country.

Stanford in the Vale is a picture-book village with a 12th-century church and houses built of local stone — some of them thatched, others using local slate. It overlooks the Vale of White Horse, with the Downs and the ancient Ridge Way road to the south. The area is steeped in history. According to the *Wessex Chronicles*, King Alfred rode his horse in the "Western valley" — probably the valley of the

White Horse. But Stanford in the Vale is not a community of retired people wanting to preserve the old at the expense of the new. As well as traditional stone houses, there are several hundred other dwellings built by the council before and after the war, many of which are now owner-occupied. The village owns a leisure field which is used primarily by the local football club, but there is no cricket pitch.

"We are in the middle of the most beautiful countryside but there is nowhere for children to play or for old people to sit and enjoy the sunshine on a summer day," Mrs Soulsby says.

But now it looks as if the field beside the church will soon belong to the village residents. It is one of 23 "millennium greens" established by the Countryside Commission as a pilot project. The Commission hopes to obtain support from the Millennium Fund to finance 1,000 before the year 2000. The Commission is providing half of the money and looks to other sources to provide the rest. A legal agreement will be made to protect the land for future generations. If the land were to be taken over for any other purpose, such as roads or housing, equivalent land would have to be provided elsewhere in the village.

The owner of the field, Hubert Howse, has brought down his price to £27,500, and the Countryside



Top: the field in the Oxfordshire village of Stanford in the Vale that will soon belong to residents. Above: an industrial site in Dormanstown, Cleveland, will also benefit from a millennium green

Commission has agreed to provide half the cost of buying and developing the field. It will be improved by the planting of trees and a hedge. Seating will be installed at one end, where parents can wait before collecting their children from the primary school next door, and at the other end, next to the ancient manor wall, there is a raised area which might be used as a stage for plays or prize-givings.

Millennium greens will be small havens for birds, trees and hedgerow creatures, but most of all they will be havens for human beings. They are conceived as spaces where people will enjoy informal leisure

pursuits, such as kicking a ball around with their children, playing cricket, throwing frisbees or flying kites.

Many of the millennium greens will be in densely populated city areas — some dominated by industry. Areas such as Dormanstown, near Redcar, Cleveland, which is situated midway between the former Dorman Long's steelworks (now British Steel) and ICI's Wilton works. Dormanstown was built in the 1920s as a garden city — a brave attempt to make the area attractive. But either the planners lost confidence, or ran out of money, because many of the trees that were

supposed to line the wide avenue roads were never planted.

Now Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council is planning to create a millennium green on a space where old houses have been cleared. The site will be landscaped and planted with native trees, shrubs and wild flowers, which will defy the maze of pipework and chemical storage tanks a few hundred yards away. The green will provide a safe play area for children and a gateway to the proposed Cleveland community forest.

Walking south from the green at Dormanstown, a hiker crosses

farmland soon to be forest and can follow an old bridle track past Lazenby bank up to the Exton Hills, where there are views of the North Sea to the east. To the south there is open country leading to the North Yorkshire Moors — an area of wilderness stretching 25 miles to the ruins of Rievaulx Abbey in the south and Robin Hood's Bay in the east.

Whether or not millennium greens will become village greens in the legal sense will, it seems, be a matter for local people to decide. The law allows the greens to be used for agricultural shows for up to 12 days a year and, if the town or village has a right to have a market, they might also be used for stalls selling crafts.

The land for several of the millennium greens has been donated by local authorities. However, these authorities sometimes don't want areas which they may intend to develop for housing to be tied up as village greens. It took Jim Briggs and his friends in Aldwick, near Bognor Regis, West Sussex, eight years to get a piece of land owned by Arun District Council registered as a village green. The land at Aldwick was a meadow left open when surrounding land was developed for private housing in 1967. As required by the Town and Country Planning Act, the meadow was destined to become the property of the local authority.

Following administrative delays, however, it was not taken over by the council until 1987, by which time it had been used by residents for leisure purposes for 20 years.

Local people applied for the land to be recognised as a village green but were opposed by Arun Council, which wished to retain it as a realisable asset. After the first application failed, local people took advice from the Open Spaces Society and, in a second application four years later, evidence of 20 years leisure use of the meadow was accepted and it was registered as a village green.

The advantage of registration is that it confers certain rights of use for recreation which do not alter with a change of ownership, and it reduces the chances of the land being used for building development. Some 33 new greens throughout England have been registered since 1990, when it became easier because a 20-year period had elapsed since the Commons Registration Act. Although most of the planned new greens will be only a few acres in size, it reverses the trend of the past 200-300 years, which has seen common land steadily enclosed by private owners.

● The Countryside Commission has an information pack for anyone interested in applying for funds for a millennium green. Write to: Millennium Greens, The Countryside Commission, 71 Kingsway, London WC2B 6ST.

● Getting Greens Registered — a guide to law and procedure, £9 inc p&p, is available from the Open Spaces Society, 25a Bell Street, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 2BA.

SAILING: If you don't know an injector from an impeller, engine lessons may save your life

Rescue for the mechanically challenged

If, like me, you go to sea to sail, to use the power of the wind and the tide, you probably regard the engine on your boat with a mixture of awe and trepidation.

Without it you can't get in and out of marinas; picking up moorings, especially in a tide, can be challenging; and when the wind dies on you on a Sunday night and you are trying to get to work on Monday, you might just be facing one of those embarrassing calls to the office. And, crucially, engines can help to get us out of trouble.

Despite the degree to which we depend on engines, many sailors — experienced ones at that — know little about them. You only have to ask the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Its statistics for lifeboat call-outs reveal that 34 per cent of all launchings to sail and powered pleasurecraft result from simple mechanical failure, and the proportion of those call-outs is increasing every year.

As long as we pay our dues to the AA or RAC, we can get away with almost total ignorance of what is going on under our car bonnet. But in the middle of the North Sea, it's just you, your spares and your engine.

As a former dinghy sailor with a distaste for mechanical matters, I needed an introduction to the diesel on my boat, *Nutcracker*. Having spent £5,000 on a new Yanmar three-cylinder during her refit last year, and a pile more naving it put in, I had no desire to wreck it through ignorance.

The Essex Sailing School in Maylandsea, on the southern

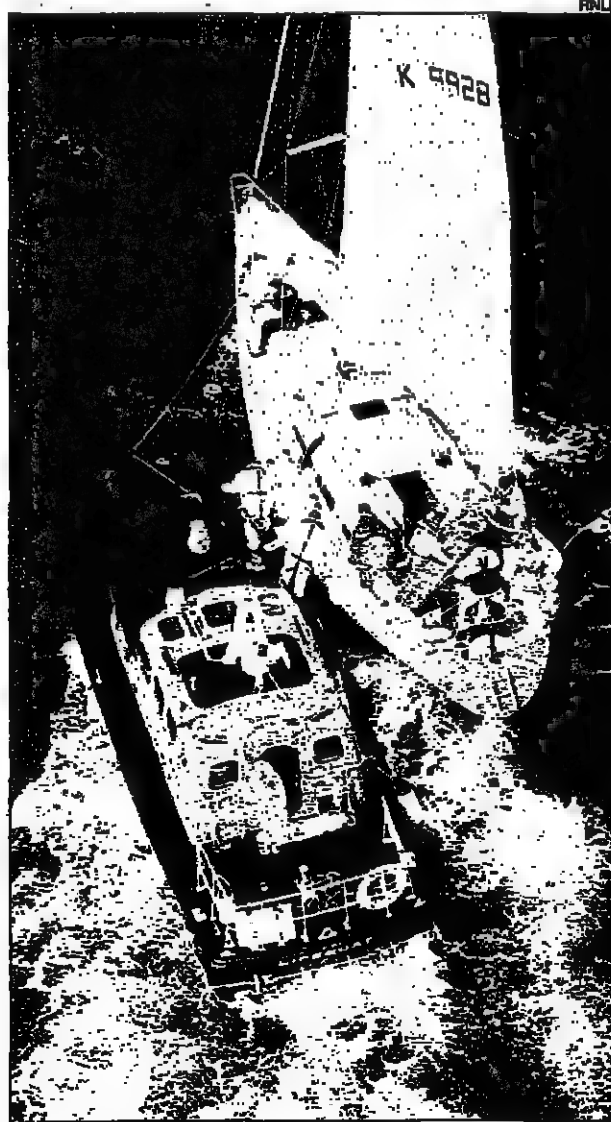
shores of the Blackwater estuary, is among many schools offering Royal Yachting Association-recognised one-day diesel courses for recreational sailors. The school runs around six courses a year, usually for about six students at a time, at £56 a head.

Mike Tyrrell, the school's principal and an engineer, believes the course is imperative for anyone embarking on the RYA's navigation and general seamanship programmes, such as the Day Skipper certificate. The aim is to give people an idea of their engine system, to avoid faults that they themselves have caused, to show which spare parts to carry and how to solve simple problems at sea — so avoiding the need to go to a workshop or to call out a lifeboat.

On my day at the school there were two other "students", Anne and Malcolm Gilding, who have owned boats for years but, like so many of us, had found a long list of reasons to put off getting to know their heat exchanger from their manifold.

It was an incident near their holiday home at Puerto Andratx in Mallorca, where they keep their Lland — a 21ft, double-ended traditional Spanish fishing boat — that finally persuaded them to go back to school. A young couple in a speedboat suffered engine failure within sight of land but, unable to mend it themselves, were blown offshore and spent three days at sea, suffering severe dehydration, before they were picked up by a fishing boat.

"I've always put it off," said



Many lifeboat call-outs are for simple mechanical failure

Mr Gilding as he settled down to examine the school's demonstration engine block, complete with cut-away sections for ease of access and viewing. "But I'm glad we've got round to it. All our friends laughed when I said I was taking my wife on a diesel-engine course, but I could be ill or have an accident on the boat. I think the more Anne knows, the better."

Under Mr Tyrrell's tutelage, we spent a surprisingly inter-

esting day getting to grips with the "suck, squeeze, bang, blow" cycle of the diesel engine, the mysteries of direct or indirect injection, the vital role of oil in the engine, the fuel system and how to bleed it, the cooling system and the general dos and don'ts of marine engines.

Did you know, for example, (I didn't) that diesels are best put to work immediately they are turned on, and that warming them up in neutral for 20

minutes before you leave your mooring does them more harm than good? It's when you return after sailing that it should be left to tick over for a while before you turn it off.

By the end of the day we were talking about fine filters, injectors, the gallery, impellers and the governor. We even had tricky test questions such as: "If the thermostat is stuck in the closed position, what part of the engine would overheat first?" Answer: the cylinder head.

Mrs Gilding admitted that it was a lot more fun and easier to understand than she had expected. She also found it very useful. "I've always been a little wary about the engine. I used to think in the back of my mind that if it stopped, I wouldn't really know what to do. This has given me more confidence. Serious things can go wrong, but if it's just a hose going or something simple, then we should be able to cope."

The RYA hopes that more and more people will attend the courses, not only to cut down the number of lifeboat call-outs to boats with often minor mechanical failure but to improve general standards of seamanship.

Unfortunately, though, it seems only the more conscientious types are doing the course. As John Hart, for 15 years coxswain of the Barry Lifeboat, who helped to devise the course, put it: "The most irresponsible people who need instruction are the ones who don't do the course. There's no allowing for the lunatic few whatever courses you put to bear."

EDWARD GORMAN

● For information about RYA-recognised engine courses, contact Jane Koochane at the RYA on 01703 627454. Similar courses are also provided by leading engine manufacturers, including Volvo Penta (01921 228544); Perkins (01733 582408); and Sabre (01282 993727).

Next week: the superyacht

Feather report

Beware the invasion of the berry snatchers



Waxwings catch snowflakes

yellow tip to the tail looks golden when the sun shines through it.

All the members of the flock sit quietly together in the bushes; then there is a flurry of berry-snatching, after which they all subside again. I

saw a pair sitting side by side like doves, even touching bills once. Their thin bill is distinctive, but not ear-catching. They eat snow, and have even been seen flying out to pick up a falling snowflake in the air.

In flight, their grey rumps are conspicuous. They are said to fly like starlings, but their undulations reminded me more of great spotted woodpeckers. They are still around everywhere, but on the move.

DERWENT MAY

● What's about: Birds — listen for the song of the chaffinch in wooded gardens and parks. Twichers — a pine bunting at Halesowen, West Midlands; a long-billed dowitcher at Copperhouse Creek, Cornwall. Details from Birdline (0891 700222). Calls cost 30p a minute cheap rate, 50p at all other times.

When is a shop not a shop?



Always on Page 2 and in Weekend Money

ROMANTIC PARIS: When all's right with the world, the French capital has never been easier to reach ...

WHERE once air travel was sophisticated, it is now uncivilised. Delays and stress come with the plane ticket. Thus, when travelling to Paris, it seems sensible to leave the roaring, drinking, toy donkey-bus populace trapped in a holding pattern above Heathrow, and take the train instead.

The Eurostar train is psychologically far less damaging than dealing with airports and ferries. There are no queues, since passports are usually checked on the train. A weekend in Paris or Brussels

has suddenly become no different, in terms of travel, from one in Yorkshire or Cornwall. The British now slip under the Channel to see major exhibitions before they come to London, or enjoy lower-priced Paris opera tickets.

The Eurostar takes three hours to Paris, and the plane 45 minutes. But if you add an hour to Heathrow by Tube, checking in, the hassle of retrieving luggage and escaping the satellites at Charles de Gaulle airport, as well as the trip in to central Paris, it is more like four.

The cheapest weekend Eurostar ticket is £59 return, £69 if you travel on a Friday, and there is no requirement to book a fortnight ahead. This compares with £69 on British Airways if you book ahead, plus an airport tax of £7, plus £20 for a taxi from Charles de Gaulle.

When you rise from the scum beneath Waterloo station into the Eurostar terminal, it is a different world. The shark-nosed TGV trains are grey, with a yellow

livery stripe. Staff in yellow and blue suits greet you in your preferred language, and help to put your bags on the train. There is a French-style café, a bureau

de change and trolleys which fit on the escalators.

In its initial stages, the service was shaky, but now 85 per cent of trains run on time. The Eurostar had its busiest weekend so far during the France-Scotland rugby international, with 17,500

passengers. Normally, many of the trains are half empty, giving one a feeling of value for money.

The food is the only let-down. In first class, at £220 return, you get a fine meal on real china featuring salmon and Belgian chocolates — but those in standard class are sadly disappointed. Fantasies of a warm *arte aux poireaux* (leek quiche) or even *steak frites* and a nice glass of Burgundy are crushed. The efforts of Gardner Merchant, the mass-catering company, are no better than

British Rail's. The *croque monsieur*, ordered with great anticipation, is rather dull and soggy. The wine comes in those teeny bottles, and it seems rude to order three at once.

The journey through the Tunnel itself takes 20 minutes and then the train manager announces: "We are now in France. The train is about to reach its full speed of 300kmph." The slight to the laggardly British is clear.

KATE MUIR
MARTIN BLACK

Happy returns in the city of light

I seldom reveal domestic intimacies but all that follows has a direct relevance. A short time ago my partner, Mary, turned 40. Albeit fresh and frolicsome, there was no denying a personality in trauma. By way of antidote, I planned a wild, romantic extravaganza, a blissful memory to comfort her on the slide to senility.

I chose Paris as a city of happy associations, superb food (culinary delights take precedence after a certain age) and with a new high-speed rail link to invoke the age of civilised travel.

We made a good start. Almost. The gleaming symbol of Anglo-French technology pulled out of Waterloo on time — stopped, and pulled back in again. A power failure, apparently. We finally got under way half an hour later. It was then that the "purser" (very posh, these trains) came on the Tannoy to announce an industrial dispute in Paris which, for reasons that were never entirely clear, prevented first-class passengers from enjoying a full breakfast menu. Instead, we were served with a selection of what tasted like cardboard cutouts of the food we might have enjoyed if the

caterers had been working normally.

However, the journey itself was an unqualified success. A smooth and speedy excursion across the fields of southern England and northern France with a 25-minute bit in the middle which has passengers staring out into a subterranean blackness. The Channel Tunnel has nothing to show but you can't help looking at it in wonderment.

A taxi from the Gard du Nord took us to the Hôtel de Crillon on the Place de la Concorde. For the uninitiated, this is no ordinary lodging house. Other hotels may match the Crillon for sheer luxury but few, if any, can aspire to its style. The only first-class hotel in Paris still under family control, it extols imperial splendour with its palatial 18th-century façade and high-ceilinged rooms stuffed with gold-painted, twiddly furniture. Modesty forbids me to specify the dimensions of our suite: suffice to say the grand piano in the corner did not look out of place.

The front view of the hotel, over the Place de la Concorde, has to be one of the finest cityscapes in Europe. The far



At night the Place de la Concorde breaks up into a riot of illumination with vehicles racing across the square. In the background the Eiffel Tower is picked out in incandescent glory

side of the square is bordered by the Seine and beyond is the National Assembly. Far to the left is the Pantheon, Notre Dame and the Louvre. To the right, the gold dome of Les Invalides shines like a beacon, while a little further on the same trajectory is the Eiffel Tower. At night the scene breaks up into a riot of illumination with vehicles racing all ways across the square, the pleasure boats passing sedately along the Seine and the famous landmarks picked out in incandescent glory.

With supper booked for Les Ambassadeurs, the grandest of the Hôtel de Crillon's two restaurants, we settled for a light lunch (if such a thing is to be had in Paris) at the Bofinger on the rue de la Bastille. We took the pretty route, a half-hour walk through little streets lined with galleries

selling pictures at affordable prices. It was a reminder that Paris is still the natural home for artists. They have here a market for paintings that is not restricted to chocolate-box clichés.

Parading as the oldest brasserie in Paris, the Bofinger can be a tourist trap. But the bubbling atmosphere overcomes the confusion of accents, and *fruits de mer* or *choucroute*, the two favourite dishes, taste all the better for serving under a splendid Art Deco glass dome. The afternoon was handed over to culture. With time at a premium we avoided the big museums in favour of the easily manageable Musée National Picasso on the rue de Thorigny. While not the most outstanding of galleries devoted to a single artist (the Van Gogh museum in Amsterdam

takes some beating) the pictures, many from Picasso's collection, reflect the full range of his imagination. The gallery is a beautifully covered 17th-century town mansion, as impressive in its own way as the treasures it contains.

And so back to the Hôtel de Crillon and the feast of Les Ambassadeurs.

While Mary fixed on the *foie gras* (served warm), a sensitive digestion led me to the lobster salad. We both followed with *lapin*, as soft and delectable as the accompanying mustard sauce. The wine was a problem. I looked towards a vintage of Mary's year of birth but the 1955 Chateau Cheval Blanc St Emilion cost more than £600. There had to be a limit and this was it. Another stab at the wine list produced a 1989 Margaux at a figure some way short of a remortgage.

The ambience was formal but not inhibiting. Among the other bill-payers were several sleek, grey-haired men, who looked as if they had done well

out of business or politics, dining with elegant women half their age. The price of wine did not figure in their conversations.

The memory of a superb meal remained strong well into the next day when we tried to rebuild the appetite with a brisk walk along the Champs-Élysées. It is always a joy but particularly on a Sunday morning when the traffic is light and there is more opportunity to stand and stare. A truly diverting sight was the gloriously politically incorrect poster for the movie, *Prêt-à-Porter* — six naked women marching purposefully towards the camera. Not seen in London, who would dare say that London is poorer as a

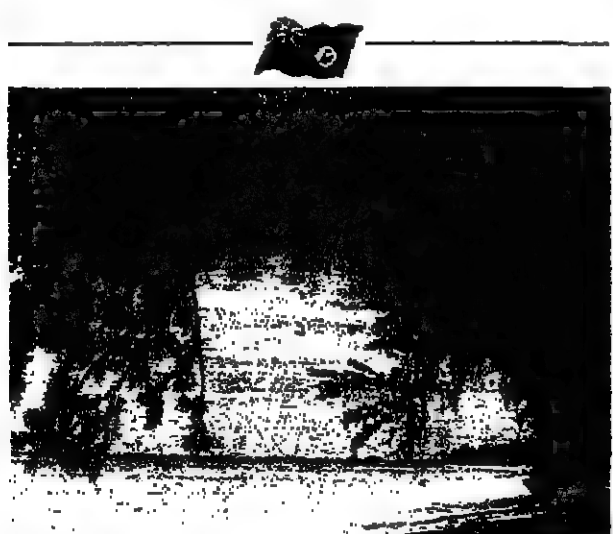
result? Well, for one. Culinary progress: continued with lunch at the Restaurant Paul, on the Place Dauphine, a small family concern, cosy in its simplicity. We ate well but not so well as to regret having to bypass the Eurostar meal on the return journey. This was because the Eurostar meal was inedible, though the champagne aperitif was welcome. We were left with the feeling that second class without free meals was better value.

Back at Waterloo, we walked out into the drizzle. There was a long queue at the taxi rank and no taxis. "Happy birthday, Mary, and welcome home."

BARRY TURNER

Paris: fact file

□ The author was assisted by Relais & Châteaux (0171-267 0987; fax 0171-437 0244).
□ Hôtel de Crillon, 10 place de la Concorde, 75008 Paris. There are 120 rooms and 43 suites. Rates per night for double (twin room, Fr2,200 (Fr240 to Fr4,100 (Fr546). Rates per night for suite: Fr4,900 (Fr632 to Fr12,500 (Fr4,300). Breakfast is from Fr155 (Fr28) to Fr230 (Fr30). For reservations contact the Hotel Crillon 800 331 44 71 15 01; fax 00 331 44 71 15 03; or Relais & Châteaux on the number above.



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THERE are more than 1,400 hotels to choose from in Paris. Many are delightful, others morbid. Here is a list of tried-and-tested favourites, and not too expensive. The emphasis is on charm and comfort, and the hotels include some of the most romantic nooks the city has to offer, though the cheapest are necessarily rather basic. Now is a good time to go, because many hotels are offering discounts.

● Prices, given in francs, are per room per night based on two people sharing. As Weekend goes to press, the exchange rate is Fr7.57 - £1.

□ PRIZE COLLECTION

If a single reservations number can suit almost any Paris hotel needs, it is Compagnie Generale Immobiliere et de Service's toll-free central reservations number, 0800 895 950, for their 28 hotels (from two to four stars). Their excellence and charm are exceptions to the customary rule that company-run hotels lack personality and flair.

At the top of the range is the superbly manorial Parc Victor Hugo, Avenue Raymond-Poincaré, 16e: five stately buildings around a courtyard near the Trocadéro, renovated in a "British" style under the direction of Nina Campbell. It is the workplace of Joël Robuchon, France's most sought-after and admired chef. From Fr2,300.

The beautifully decorated Balfiore, between the Étoile and Trocadéro on Avenue Kléber, 16e, is handily poised above the Bois de Boulogne. It must appeal even to Euro-septics: its restaurant, Bertie's, offers only British food. From Fr1,990.

The Castille in Rue Cambon, 1er, has an Italian flavour and offers access to the Ritz's health centre. From Fr2,300. CGIS's 18 Liberté establishments — two or three-star hotels — are similarly brilliant at their own level. They include the Bellechasse (from Fr910), near the Orsay museum, the Grand Turenne (from Fr840) in the Marais, the Moulon (from Fr810) in Pigalle and the chimney



Victorianised. Terminus Nord, which offers huge rooms at relatively small prices (Fr500-Fr675), right beside Eurostar's Paris terminal.

□ IDIOSYNCRATIC CHARM
The Hôtel du Jeu de Paume: 5 Rue St Louis-en-l'Île (43 26 14 18; fax 40 46 02 76). A stunning discovery in what was the royal tennis court on the Isle St Louis: a miracle of glass, timbers and hanging galleries. The rooms (from Fr795) are light, airy and delightful.

Saint-Merry: 78, Rue de la Verrerie, 4e (42 78 34 15; fax 40 29 06 82). A gothic riot, installed in the presbytery of the Eglise St-Merry and fitted out in darkly ecclesiastical style. Fr400-Fr950.

Vieux Paris: 9 Rue Gît-le-Cœur, 6e (43 54 41 66; 43 26 00 15). Louis XI Left Bank

building in a quiet alley near the Seine. Fr990-Fr1470.

Terrace Hôtel: 12-14 Rue Joseph de Maistre, 18e (46 06 72 85). Overlooking Montmartre cemetery. The roof-terrace restaurant has a terrific view over Paris. Fr990-Fr1,230.

Saint-Grégoire: 43 Rue de l'Abbé Grégoire, 6e (45 48 23 23). Near Montparnasse, it has a yellow and pink decor, nice old furniture, with breakfasts in a vaulted cellar. Fr760-Fr890.

Grands Hommes: 17 Place du Pantheon, 5e (46 34 19 60). The birthplace of Surrealism, comfortable and friendly. Opposite the Pantheon. Fr635-Fr760.

Hôtel de la Bretonnerie: 27 Rue Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie, 4e (48 87 77 63; fax 42 77 26 78). Enthusiastically run in a 17th-century building between the Pompidou Centre and the Marais. Most rooms big, some with beams. Fr200-Fr730.

□ CHEAP BUT CHEERFUL

Esmeralda: 4 Rue St-Julien-le-Pauvre, 5e (43 54 19 28). The owner of this quaint little 16th-century place is a painter, sculptor and writer. Some rooms have views of Notre Dame. Fr450-Fr490.

Prima Lepic: 29 Rue Lepic, 18e (46 06 44 64). Welcoming family-run hotel in the market street of Montmartre. Breakfast in a trompe-l'œil orangery. Fr350-Fr400.

Nesle: 7 Rue de Nesle, 6e (43 54 62 41). Exotic decor, and urban farmyard. Cash only — up front. Fr260-Fr320.

□ BASIC BARGAINS

Hôtel des Arts: 7 Cité Bergère, 9e. Well-run and friendly, in a quiet alley with other good cheap hotels. Fr325-Fr380.

Pratic Hôtel: 20, Rue de l'Ingénieur Keller, 15e. Clean, friendly hotel near the Eiffel Tower. Fr225-430.

Ideal: 3 Rue des Trois-Frères, 18e (46 06 63 63). Clean bargain close to the Sacré-Cœur funicular. Fr125-Fr250.

ROBIN YOUNG

... a second honeymoon in a north Devon hotel; and the smart way to score romantic Brownie points

Rewritten version of bride's bed revisited

We first saw the Highbullen Hotel in 1976 through a haze of champagne and confetti. Our memories are of a warm, red room, acres of wood paneling, a big brass bed and feeling slightly miffed at being asked not to smoke in the restaurant. Wrapped up in the brand-new sensation of being married, we delighted in good food and wine, scarcely noticed the sporting facilities on offer, and felt pleasantly marooned by the floods that beset north Devon that year.

It was raining again when we revisited the hotel in Chittlehamholt last summer, this time with children in tow. It is always a little nerve-racking returning to a place you remember with affection. Perhaps our recollections were distorted by honeymoon happiness. Perhaps this was not the right place to bring children: after all the hotel does stipulate "No children under eight".

We need not have worried on either count. If anything, Highbullen has improved. A Victorian Gothic mansion full of turrets and towers, it stands in a parkland estate dotted with cottages, farms and lodges, most of which have been converted into additional guest bedrooms. Just over a year ago Highbullen acquired 65 acres of ancient woodland inhabited by wild red and roe deer, foxes and badgers. Another recent addition is an 18-mile stretch of fishing rights along the banks of the River Mole. A second restaurant added in the 1980s juts out over a wooded valley and the views, especially at sunset, are magnificent. Pious former-smokers, we now wholeheartedly endorse the restaurant's no-smoking policy.

As soon as we saw the abundance of other families with adolescent and teenage children, we relaxed. Highbullen is an informal, family-run hotel. Hugh and Pam Neil first came across the place in 1963 — "a ridiculous house full of bats and broken windows, no water and a decrepit generator" — and moved in with their two small children, both

of whom are now closely involved with the running of the hotel.

Mrs Neil, a devotee of auctions since the 1940s, has furnished many rooms at Highbullen with her "finds". The vast, ornate Victorian mahogany bed in our room cost £13 in the 1950s and the pale green, tasselled velvet curtains were a mere £3. Mrs Neil uses antique textiles she has collected to make curtains and lampshades for the bedrooms. She dries her own flowers, and every nook and cranny of the hotel is filled with dried arrangements and, in season, vases of fresh sweet peas and roses from the garden.

On our honeymoon we rarely emerged from our comfortable cocoon. A bracing ten-mile walk in pouring rain to Barnstaple (and the return trip in the back of a haystrew)



A honeymoon bedroom: furnished with antiques

pickup van) was our only foray into the outside world. The sporting facilities we had ignored then as a couple were now a boon for a family. We had hardly unpacked before our son and daughter had ferreted out the indoor putting green, and table tennis room. Later, Helen swam like a dolphin in the deserted, kidney-shaped indoor pool while I had my toe nails painted bright red in the leisure complex and Paul finally managed



Highbullen Hotel: a Victorian Gothic mansion set in a parkland estate dotted with cottages, farms and lodges

professional is available for lessons, the attitude towards golf at Highbullen is pleasantly laid-back. The Neils were happy for Helen to try to hit a ball around a few holes, an idea that would cause agony at most Home Counties golf clubs. One elderly pair of ladies only plays golf during their annual visit to the hotel because they feel it's the one course where they will not be sneered at or patronised.

This relaxed attitude permeates the atmosphere at Highbullen. When the sun shines guests can eat the very good, inexpensive bar snacks (salads, sandwiches, lasagne etc) in a pretty, flower-filled courtyard. Dinner is an informal affair, so a tie and jacket are not essential. The food is pleasant (Della Smith once worked in the kitchen), and our son declared the meringue filled with clotted cream one of the best dishes he has tasted in months — but the menu is not aimed at anyone counting calories or cholesterol. Many of the main courses are served in rich sauces, vegetables come smothered in butter and the dessert list is sinful. If asked, the staff were always willing to leave out the butter

or sauces and to produce fruit salads and low-fat milk, but I did wonder if I was the only person among so many sporting types who was worried about healthy eating. The emphasis at Highbullen is on comfort rather than frills. It is full of unexpected pleasures such as the well-stocked library, the bubbling spa bath and a room devoted to billiards. Although the bathrooms had few of the small luxuries normally associated with four or five-star hotels, the overall effect is of a large, rambling, pleasant and comfortable country house.

If we were not able to recapture fully the delightful

self-indulgence and contentment we had enjoyed as newlyweds, this was due to family demands, not the hotel. We are currently hatching plans to farm the children out for a weekend so we can return to Highbullen on our own. Perhaps in time for our 20th anniversary.

SARA DRIVER

Highbullen Hotel, Chittlehamholt, Umberleigh, North Devon EX37 9HD (01769 540561). The Driver family were guests of Crystal Premier Britain (0181-390 8513) which offers breaks at the hotel from £47.50 per person per night for dinner, bed and breakfast.

VALENTINE GETAWAYS

IF HUGGY-BUN really loves Pooh-Bear and wants to demonstrate the fact on Valentine's Day, that loving message in the classified ads ought to be backed up with a weekend somewhere romantic. Romantic locations are plentiful and a phone call to one of the following places could provide a bonus — hugs and kisses — in the weeks to come. Prices are the lowest available for a weekend (two nights) bed and breakfast, per person, unless otherwise stated.

The Cotswolds have many romantic corners, and candle-lit dinners are just one feature of a romantic weekend at the Lysons Arms in Broadway (01386 85255, £25 with dinner and a bottle of champagne). Other attractions include a country club with pool and solarium.

The north Norfolk coast is full of romantic locations, from splendid towns such as King's Lynn, to pretty villages such as Wells-next-the-Sea and historic Walsingham. It can be breezy, so wrap up well and book in at the warm and hospitable Coombe Hall (01493 60250, £170 with dinner), an elegant Georgian house in Hillington now converted into a first-class hotel.

MOVING north, the Gulf Stream warms Portpatrick in Wigtownshire, on the west coast of Scotland, where the small but perfect Knockinaam Lodge (01776 81047, £125 with dinner) has sub-tropical gardens, a Michelin-rossetted restaurant, and a programme of champagne tastings.

All right for some, but what about people with children? No problem if you book in for a romantic weekend at Calson Manor (01666 890391, £130 with dinner), a charming manor-house hotel near Tetbury in Gloucestershire. This hotel will look after the children while you and the Floppy Bunny relax in one of two fine restaurants.

Other hotels offering child care include Woolley Grange (01225 864705, £97), close to ever-romantic Bath, and Ockenden Manor (01444 416111, £138 with dinner), in the ancient village of Cuckfield in West Sussex, from where adventurous lovers can take their partners ballooning, just to give the weekend a lift.

Romantic weekends require romantic locations, so cities such as York should do well, especially for those who stay at Middlethorpe Hall (01904 641241, £188 with dinner) a splendid hotel set in a William and Mary mansion.

London has plenty of corners and can be explored at leisure from small, centrally located hotels such as the Athenaeum (0800 964470, £180) — anyone who proposes while dining in the restaurant on Valentine's Day and then marries that person can have a free honeymoon stay — or Dukes Hotel in St James's (0171-491 4840, £180), close to the splendours of Royal London ... and the Knightsbridge shopping area.

Finally, try one of the following: Llanged Hall (01874 754525, £170 with dinner; Feb 14, £60 double room B&B) near Hay on Wye; the Maes y Neuadd Hotel (01766 780200, £130 with dinner) near Harlech in Snowdonia; the Well House (01579 342001, £144) at St Keyne, near Liskard in Cornwall; Johnstoneburn House (01895 835656, £130) at Humble in East Lothian; and the Manor Hotel (01308 897616, £100 with dinner) at West Bevington on the Dorset coast. All these places offer a warm welcome, good food, attentive staff and a romantic atmosphere. After that it is up to you; most lovers would prefer it that way.

ROBIN NEILLANDS

Rendezvous, page 9



GED

Baalbeck to Palmyra

A 7-night visit to Syria and Lebanon from £595.00

Our newly inaugurated flight from London Gatwick to Damascus enables us to offer a comprehensive visit to two of the most important countries of antiquity in the Middle East, which have been little-visited in the recent past. The Syrian section of the itinerary takes in the famous sites of Damascus, Crac des Chevaliers and Palmyra whilst in Lebanon we visit both the ancient sites of Baalbeck and Palmyra together with a restful two-night stay at Anis on Lebanon's Corniche. This is without doubt a wonderful opportunity to visit some of the world's most interesting sites.

We reach Damascus in the evening and spend the first night in the oldest living city in the world and the Islamic capital under the Omayyads. Exploration of the city has to be on foot, navigating the tortuous alleys of the old city is wonderful.

Palmyra is a very special place — the city has colonnaded streets and monumental arches but is perhaps most well known for the Temple of Baal.

The Lebanese are proudly aware that they stand at a historic crossroads. Behind them lies two decades of violence that claimed thousands of lives and brought the country's economy, its shattered capital, suburbs and towns, and even its people, to the edge of anarchy. The civil war and military incursions robbed Lebanon of its reputation as the Middle East's market place and the quintessential travel destination.

So now, at long last, it is again possible to visit this most important of countries which has had such a profound effect on the world's civilisations. Its ideal situation at the crossroads of the three continents, Africa, Europe and Asia, and its temperate climate have attracted eminent figures from history — Ramesses II, Sargon, Darius, Alexander, the Caesars, Heliogabalus, Saladin, Tamerlane and Napoleon. Most have left their imprint, especially at the historical sites of Byblos and Baalbeck.

Itinerary

Day 1 Depart by Monarch Airways special flight from London Gatwick to Damascus. Transfer to the Al-Paradise Hotel and stay for two nights.

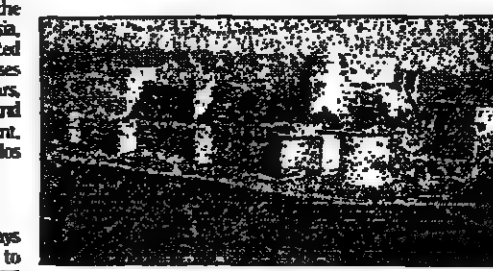
Day 2 Visit the Omayyad Mosque, Saladin's Tomb and Old City. The Church of Annunziata and the Old Street Called Straight. Walk through the tortuous alleys of the Old City. See the chapel commemorating the lowering down of St Paul from a window.

Day 3 Depart for Palmyra. In Palmyra we will visit the Temple of Baal, the colonnaded streets, theatre, monumental arches and tombs. Continue to Hama for the night.

Day 4 Drive to Crac des Chevaliers, the residence of the crusader knights. Cross the border into Lebanon via Tripoli to Anis and the



visiting Damascus, Palmyra, Crac des Chevaliers, the Cedars, Tripoli, Byblos, Beirut, Zhalé and Baalbeck



Marina del Sol Hotel (which will be our base for the next two nights). Located some 35 miles north of Beirut in the fashionable coastal resort of Anis, the hotel's features include rooms with ensuite facilities, hairdresser and swimming pool.

Day 5 Follow the coast road to Tripoli and visit the citadel, the monumental gateway, the inner courtyard of the Castle of St Gilles built by the Franks, and also see the Mosque of Abdel Wahed constructed in a delicate Moorish style. Also visit the Khan al-Khalatya dating from the Byzantine period. Travelling through the Kadisha Valley arrive at Becharreh and from there travel to the Cedars. At Mt. Malma visit the Kadisha

grottoes through which runs the Holy River. Return to the hotel via Ehden where we will have lunch at Nabeh Mar Sarkis.

Day 6 Travel south to Byblos, whose temples are 4,000 years old. It is still enclosed by ramparts dating 3000 BC and is dominated by the keep of the French castle. In the afternoon a half-day city tour of Beirut will be made taking in the main points. We then proceed to our base for the next two nights, the 5-star Chateau Palace near Zhalé.

Day 7 Travel to Baalbeck. 'City of the Sun'. The acropolis is the largest and best preserved corpus of Roman architecture left. Return in the late afternoon to the hotel for dinner and overnight in Zhalé.

Day 8 In the morning depart Zhalé for the Lebanese/Syrian border for Damascus airport to catch the return flight to London Gatwick airport.

Departure

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GREECE: Matthew Bond takes his choice between solitude and socialising in the northern Sporades...

Blessed by the god of holidays

On day one I tangled with a jellyfish. On day two I trod on a sea urchin. On day three... It was time to strike a deal with whichever Greek god it is that protects Alonissos, the least known and least developed of the northern Sporades. "Enough, enough," I cried. "You start looking after me properly and I promise to write only nice things about your island." At that precise moment, however, I was in no position to negotiate. I was treading the crystal clear waters of the Aegean, some 15m off the beautiful beach of Megalo Mourtia, staring desperately into the blue, blue depths which had just claimed my wedding ring.

One moment of energetic, show-off front crawl it was there, the next — gone. Miserably I turned towards the beach — not waving, nor indeed drowning, but certainly heading towards divorce.

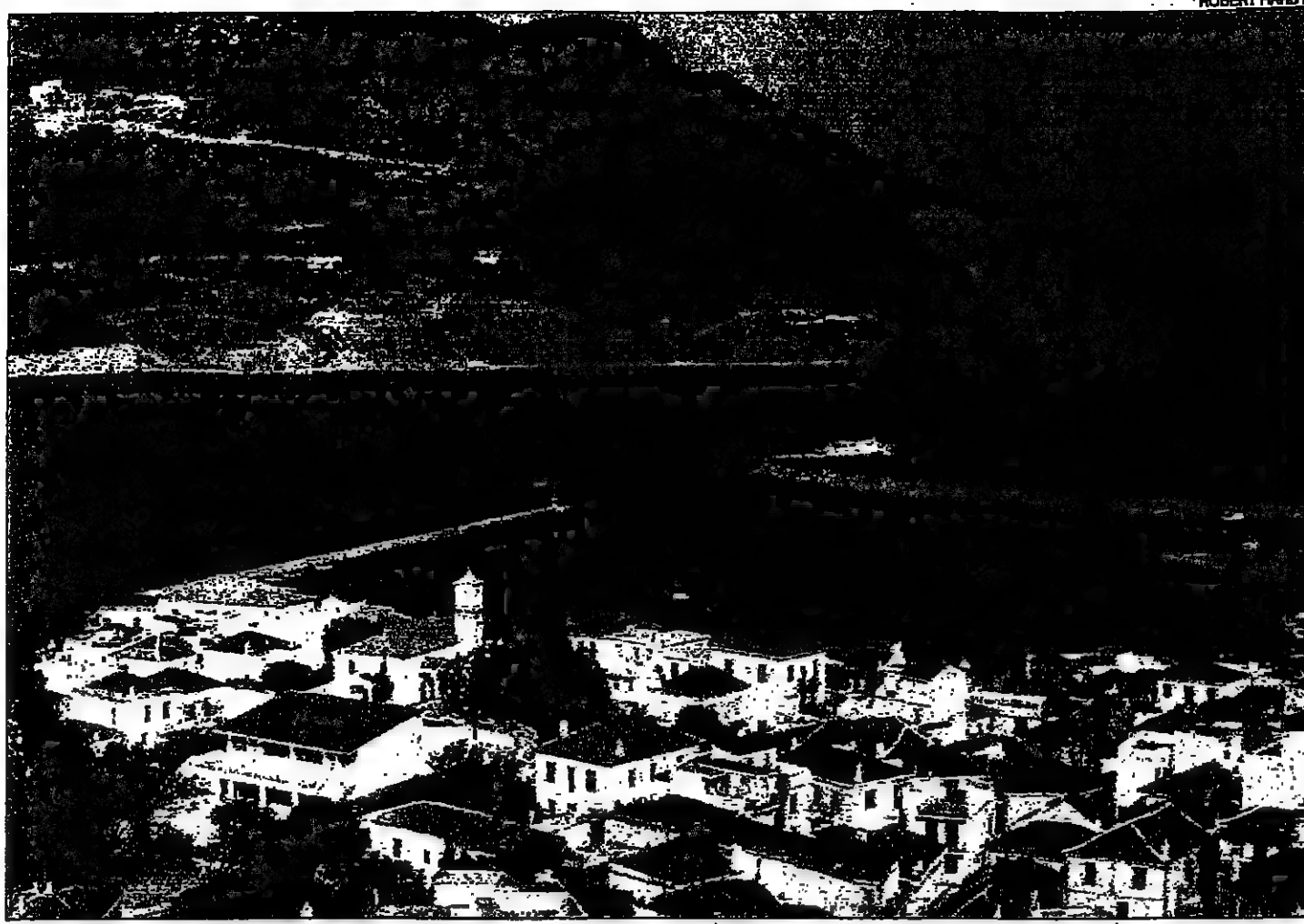
But fair's fair, the old god made good. Less than five minutes later a passing Norwegian snorkeller surfaced, spluttering the Norwegian for "is this it?"

And from that moment on, Alonissos and I got on... well, swimmingly is not the right word, but certainly very well. For it, too, has known serial misfortune. In 1950 its vines were devastated by disease; in 1965 its main village was destroyed by an earthquake and in recent years large tracts of its exquisite pine forests have been laid waste by fire. But houses can be rebuilt, mainland wines bought in and enough trees survive to make Alonissos a relaxing stop-off point on a tour of the sometimes-hectic Sporades.



For the first week we stayed in a hillside villa on the outskirts of Old Alonissos, with spectacular 180-degree views towards the uninhabited island of Peristera in one direction and the distant, purple hills of Evvia in the other. And yes, old Alonissos is the town that was destroyed by the earthquake.

One man's disaster is another man's opportunity and while the original inhabitants were quickly rehoused in the island's main port, Patitiri, the shells of their once-beautiful houses in old Alonissos were snapped up by bargain-seeking foreigners. And beautiful many of them are once again, although now they are owned by English, Germans, Italians and even the odd American. The beautiful process, by the way, continues apace and during the day the air can echo to the sound of electric saws and power drills. It's not a



Skopelos has more restaurants, beaches and people — but is more expensive — than other towns on the northern Sporades coastline.

problem, you just go the beach.

The end results of all this relatively recent toil can come as a pleasant surprise to those whose idea of an island holiday home is simply white-washed walls and a stone floor. Ours, for instance, kept with tradition outside but inside the boundary wall boasted four glorious sun terraces and a well-equipped kitchen that made eating in a real possibility. When you're facing the third chicken souvlaki in as many days, that can be a comforting thought.

Not to be outdone by the incomers, the local authority has also embarked on a programme of improvements and is setting quite a

pace. In the week we were resident about half the island's dirt roads were tarred for the first time. Such progress is probably anathema to those who have been driven to Alonissos — first from Skiathos and then from neighbouring Skopelos — by the search for peace and quiet. But it makes life a lot easier for the casual visitor.

The tracks that descend from the main road running along the island's mountainous spine are very steep in places and not ideally suited to mopeds. Although you can reach most of the beaches by caique from Patitiri, further exploration

really does require a car. Ours came with the villa and allowed us to explore several of the beaches along the island's eastern coastline. Although they don't quite measure up to Skopelos and Skiathos (you don't really find sand on Alonissos) the water is very clean and there are far fewer people about. But again the pace of change means you should be prepared for surprises. Driving north to Ayos Dimitrios, in search of what the latest edition of the *Rough Guide* described as "real solitude", we found a strip of perfect white shingle, a line of perfectly arranged beach umbrellas and a bar playing contemporary dance music. We

loved it — much more fun than solitude. In search of more of the same we spent our second week on Skopelos, less than an hour away by Flying Dolphin hydrofoil. The change was instantly apparent — more restaurants, more beaches and a lot more people. It took getting used to. As did some of the prices — the early evening views from the fishing village of Agnoudas are wonderful but it is the moon you work out that the fish you have just ordered has cost £30 that lingers in the memory.

However, there are ways of escaping the crowds. First, you can rent one of the growing number of superior villas, which give you the

Getting there

□ The author is a guest of the Greek Islands Club (01932 220477). On Alonissos he stayed at Eves House, which sleeps up to four but for two people costs from £905 per person a week in low season to £1,224 in high season, including flights, transfers, maid service and car hire. On Skopelos he stayed at Jennie's House, which can sleep up to six but for two people costs from £943 per person per week in low season to £1,348 in high season.

□ Greek Islands Club's spring "Private Collection" brochure has villas and hotels priced from £1,000 per person per week.

opportunity to create your own private enclave. Ours — an exquisite building with a high-ceilinged main room resembling an artist's studio — was in the middle of its own olive grove, an oasis of tranquillity just five minutes' moped ride from Skopelos Town. A tranquil oasis that is, as long as you didn't mind the sound of dogs, cockerels and an unhappy mule.

An alternative route to peace and quiet is to hire a boat at Panormos and motor slowly northwards along the coastline. Just past the vast pebble beach of Milia, you reach Hovolo, where a succession of inlets not accessible by land just about guarantees you a private beach. The only problem is that when you find paradise, you want to stay there. So remember to take a picnic. We didn't, so headed north to Loutraki and lunch.

The island's well-maintained road network offers another means of escape, particularly if you don't mind bumping the last couple of miles to the wilder, rockier north-east coast. But there is escape and, when the latest theatre of the harbour-side promenade got too much, we headed up the steep, narrow streets towards the Castro, a ruined Venetian fortress. History was not our aim. Happiness, we had discovered, was a café called Vlahos, a barman who knew his cocktails and a waiter who liked modern jazz. And probably the best view on the island.

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□ For those embarking on an inter-rail adventure, the revised 1996 *Europe by Train* book by Katie Wood and George McDonald (HarperCollins, £9.99) is essential. Written for travellers on a tight budget, the guide gives comprehensive information on all aspects of rail travel, accommodation in chosen places, sight-seeing and nightlife, details of Channel Tunnel options and up-to-date facts about Eastern Europe.

□ Martin Randall Travel (0181-742 3355) is offering river cruises along the Danube during the Austro-Hungarian Music-Festival, August 10-17. Taking in ten concerts, the cruise starts at Passau in Germany and visits Vienna, Budapest and Bratislava, returning via Melk and Linz in Austria. The cost is from £1,750 per person, based on two sharing, including return flights from Manchester, Birmingham, Edinburgh or Heathrow to Munich, seven-nights' full-board accommodation on the *MS Rousse*, all excursions, concerts, lectures and guides.

□ Live! in Europe (01709 839839) is offering rock concert packages. For example, a four-day break to Paris to see Tina Turner at the Bercy Omnisports Arena on May 3 costs £149 per person, including two nights at a 3 or 4-star hotel, with breakfast. Departs May 2, travelling via Le Shuttle.

□ Headwater Holidays (01606 486999) has an end-of-season family ski break at the Venabu Hotel in Gudsbrandsdalen, Norway. Departing March 30, the price of £786 per adult, and £458 per child (aged four-11), includes return flights from Heathrow to Oslo, seven nights' full-board accommodation, skis, boots and ski pass.

□ Treat your loved one to a Valentine's break at the first-class Château de Fère in the Champagne region of France. Unicorn Holidays (01582 834400) offers the break at £140 per person for overnight accommodation, a gourmet meal with a bottle of champagne, breakfast, and return Dover-Calais ferry crossing. Departs February 14.

□ Elysian Holidays (01797 225482) has a self-contained 19th-century house on the Greek island of Syros, 20 minutes flying time from Athens. For example, staying at Talanta, which sleeps eight, during the Greek Easter holidays (April 14-15) costs £1,000 per week for the house (flights not included), including house-keeper and linen. Beaches and watersports nearby. Available from April 6.

□ A three-night break in Athens staying at the 3-star Philippos Hotel with Argo Holidays (0171-331 7070) costs £245 per person, including B&B and return flights from Heathrow. Departs February 16.

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ICELANDAIR

... and once there, **Ginny Dougary** sees her spouse in a pleasing new light; plus where to find fine food

How my husband became a Euro-hero

I did not start well. I had been anticipating the short, sharp thrill of romance, not the bug-eyed haul of a flight to New York. It had been more than a year since my husband and I last had a break from the rollercoaster demands of family life. A cupidous recharge was long overdue. For months we had been looking forward to our midweek break in Paris, now only three hours away from London by Eurostar.

Half an hour out of Waterloo our zippy, new, high-speed train stopped in its tracks. As the minutes, and then the hours creaked by, it became increasingly clear that the minor technical hitch was a major electrical blow-out: we seemed destined to spend our romantic break in south Croydon. Our dinner could not be served because there was no power to heat it. The dimky pink pseudo-Deco lamps were the first to go, followed by the neon strip above them, then the emergency lights dimmed and faded, one by one, until we were plunged into darkness.

As the next train for Paris whizzed by, ours limped back to London past those names which resonate with romance: Bromley South, Beckenham Junction, Penge East and Brixton. At ten o'clock, we drew into Waterloo, it had taken us four hours to get back to where we had started.

When we finally arrived in Paris, it was three in the morning. As we filed down to the taxi rank, it was painfully evident that the Gallic cabbies had not been warned about our late arrival. There was not a taxi in sight. My husband took charge, leading the troops into the deserted streets around the Gare du Nord. Had he not done so, we might have stood there, dazed and befuddled, until dawn. My hubby, the Euro-hero. This, at least, was good for romance.

The Hôtel de Vigny, whose staff greeted us sympathetically at 4am, proved equally restorative, and after six hours' sleep, the world seemed a much better place.

You can keep Paris in the springtime. As far as I am concerned, autumn is the business. We hit the Bois de Boulogne, where lovers walk as the russet leaves tumble out of the sky. Across the Champs-Élysées and a promenade down the grand Avenue des Champs-Élysées, where the poorest countries boast the most opulent, honey-coloured embassies, and everywhere there is something to please the eye. The scalloped roads, the trees sprouting out of their filigree doilies, the wrought-iron fences.

The park itself was in full autumnal bloom. The smoke-green depths of the lake emerging from the amber foliage; the purple-leaved trees with their bright orange berries like Christmas lights. A handsome man rowing past gave a wicked smile. All of which is rather good for the senses, if not the soul.

Best of all was lunch. It is a tremendous feeling to stumble on somewhere uniquely Parisian without the aid of a guide book. This was an unpromising kiosk with an extraordinary clientele of dog owners. At one table there were leather-jacketed bikers. Their neighbours were a pair of genteel and exquisitely dressed elderly ladies. There was a family group of moth-



Keep Paris in the springtime: autumn is the business

ers, babies and grannies, all wearing hairbands. And a sprawling circle of low-lifers: a navy-blazer drunk who performed an operatic duet with Mustafa, the kiosk-owner. "Oh merde, j'ai soif!"

"Attendez, j'arrive", a huge man with an auvergne face, cowboy hat and anorak; a very old man, his grizzled head swaddled in a Breton sweater; and a Josephine Baker lookalike who nibbled her chicken leg with an air of detached refinement.

It was a delicious but noisy experience, tucking into sautéed potatoes, flecked with herbs, a salad and omelette, red wine served in Fante beakers, under the clear blue skies; the members of the dog club yelling at their pekes, poodles and labradors.

On to the Empire-style mansion of the Musée Marmottan on rue Louis-Bouilly, a short walk from Mustafa's kiosk. There is something peculiarly beguiling about a small museum. The Musée Rodin, the Dulwich Picture Gallery, the Marmottan are all gracious buildings in lovely grounds, with just enough great art to leave you feeling nourished but not overfed. At the Marmottan there is a room full of wondrous medieval illuminations, all blues and pinks and golds worked in meticulous detail. And, downstairs, a collection of some of the best-known Impressionist works, including *Water Lilies* and the painting which gave a name to the movement, *Impression: Sunrise*.

Beautiful paintings should be enough to transport the true romantic into a state of dreamy intoxication. But my husband and I are a pair of shameless voluptuaries. We need the real thing. We return to our bedroom for a glass of champagne and a duo of religious: two sumptuous balls of coffee-iced pastry. Emerging several hours later, we were refreshed, invigorated and ready for more food.

Paris: fact file

- The author was a guest of Relais & Châteaux and Eurostar.
- Hôtel de Vigny, 9-11 rue Balzac, 75008 Paris. There are 26 rooms and 11 suites. Rates per night for a double/twin room are Fr 2,200 (£290) to Fr 2,600 (£340). Rates per night for suite are Fr 2,600 (£340) to Fr 4,500 (£600). Breakfast is Fr 90 (£12) per person. Reservations contact the Hotel Vigny: (0033) 40750439; fax (0033) 40750581 or Relais & Châteaux.

Eurostar

□ There are up to 13 Eurostar trains a day between London and Paris starting at 6.19am from London and 6.37 from Paris (7.10 on Saturdays, 8.07am on Sundays). The journey takes just over three hours. The last train from Paris leaves at 20.07 and from London at 18.53 (17.53 on Saturdays, 19.23 on Sundays). Some stop at Ashford, Calais Frethun and Lille. Return fares start from £59. Standard returns are £125. The first-class fare is £230.

□ For availability and bookings call (toll-free) 0345 851881 or contact travel agents and some stations.

The plump ranks of pillows in the boudoir make one feel mistressy and illicit

The Hôtel de Vigny, like the Musée Marmottan, is small in size and huge in its pleasures. This sort of discreet opulence is perfect for engendering the sense of a dangerous liaison. The antique chandeliers, the mirrors, the *seils de bain* in chamois marble, the plump ranks of snowy pillows in the boudoir off the little living room lined with old books by illustrious authors, all seductively conspire to make one feel mistressy and illicit.

Sadly, this sense of languorous well-being was not to last. We had asked the charming hotel manager to suggest a "hot" new restaurant for dinner. She chose Yvan, off the Champs-Élysées; a big hit apparently with the fashion crowd. You might think that this, in itself, would be an inherently dubious recommendation for a couple who like to eat. And you would be right. But it was late and we were still recovering from Eurostar, so off we went for our 10.30pm sitting.

It is a pretty restaurant. Rather too pretty. Yvan is so full of extravagantly-perfumed displays of flowers and eye-dazzling paintings of fruit and marble busts that one's senses are overloaded. You feel exhausted before you start.

Before you start. We waited for half an hour before we were seated, by which time the queue was snaking out of the front door. The food, when it arrived, was cold; the sauce had congealed during the long waits. The service was sloppy and imperious. Mustafa's kiosk, at a fraction of the price, was hands down.

Craveyards may not be most people's idea of a romantic outing, but they are mine. A moss-covered morgue brings out the moody adolescent in me, which was the last time my heart was broken. And as all romantics know, it is always more lyrical to be love's victim than her victor.

Père Lachaise Cimetière.

where we spent the next morning tramping, was a disappointment. Too many American tourists and bolshy guards and not enough overgrown ruins. We searched, in vain, for the monuments to Héloïse and Abélard (the *amants célèbres*). The directions to the graves of Simone Signoret and Oscar Wilde had been obliterated by the tracing of millions of fingers over the years. There was a gratifyingly macabre monolith with a frieze of laughing skulls and a touching display of fresh flowers in front of Rossini's resting place. We did find ourselves in front of the tomb of James Douglas Morrison (1943-1971), which now requires the presence of two fulltime guards "parce que les gens ne respectent pas". One of the tributes was a scrap of paper with the words "Hello, I Love You - A poem." I toyed with the idea of leaving my poem, *Light My Fire*, but thought better of it.

We had our last meal in a wonderfully old-fashioned restaurant, in what is becoming the mega-trendy new quartier of Paris. The Bastille is now being stormed by 1960s design shops and off-the-wall galleries.

Frankly, I am beginning to worry about my husband. He chose to eat calves brains for lunch. And on our slow meander back to the station he was captivated by the displays of offal in the charcuteries. "Will you look at that!" he said in front of one spectacular array of pigs' heads. "What a beautiful sight."

Well, they do say Paris brings out the romantic in you.



Sur le pont Alexandre III: even Parisian bridges bring out the romantic in you

RECOMMENDED RESTAURANTS

THE frustration of eating out in Paris is trying to eat more than three meals a day. Breakfast, though, is the best time to visit. Les Deux Magots or Café Flore, the landmark cafés of St-Germain. Before tourists overcrowd the terraces, you will find regulars, there for the pleasure of "la corbeille du boulanger", excellent coffee and pressed orange.

Conveniently close to the Étoile and the Arc de Triomphe is the latest stylish adjunct to the Guy Savoy stable, Cap Vernet, at 82 avenue Marceau, (47 20 20 40). The cooking is quick and precise and the bill about Fr200-250 a head.

After a romantic stroll from Notre-Dame over the islands in the Seine, try Au Gourmet de l'Isle, at 42 rue St-Louis-en-l'Île, (43 26 79 27). This is quintessentially Parisian, the food is straightforward and traditional, and the bill could be less than Fr150 each.

A quieter alternative in the same street is Le Monde des Châtaignes, at number 69 (43 54 45 27), typical of old Paris. The cooking is familiar but luscious and one's bill about Fr300.

In the delightful Marais square, the Place de Vosges, La Guirlande de Julie at number 25 (48 87 94 07) has its terrace under the arcades. It has common ownership with the Tour d'Argent (15-17, quai de la Tourneville, 43 54 23 31) which charges astronomically for its unrivalled view of Notre-Dame and dishes that have been classics for decades. At La Guirlande the cooking is lighter, more modern and more affordable, about Fr225.

For a big brasserie try Bofinger, 3-7 rue de la Bastille, (42 72 87 82), full of copper and mirror and waiters negotiating a tricky staircase with incredibly heavy-laden trays held boldly aloft. About Fr200 a head.

In Montmartre the best address is A. Beauvilliers at 52 rue Lamark, a period piece serving distinguished cooking. The cost, though, is likely to be at least Fr500.

Le Café Marty (49 26 06 60) at 93 rue de Rivoli overlooks the Louvre's Cour Napoléon. It is usually crowded, and service can be slow. About Fr250.

Even more distinguished is Les Monuments in the Trocadéro (44 05 90 00). The food is fine, about Fr350 a head, and the view is terrific.

ROBIN YOUNG

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... Neil Maclean explores the chewing-gum island of Chios; and Mike Gerrard samples Greek food



Women sit and talk outside their homes in Pyrgi, one of the mastic villages of Chios

Homer's secret hideaway

The first pupil to be scolded for chewing gum in class — and I am almost completely sure of my facts here — was one of Homer's lads, sitting on the rocky outcrop above the village of Vrontados on the island of Chios.

The old blind poet, perched on what is now known as Homer's Seat, on hearing sounds of mastication, uttered the immortal lines: "What are you chewing boy? Spit it out," which has since become a refrain of teachers throughout the ages, only recently superseded, in the late 20th century, by: "What are you smoking boy? Get off the ceiling."

It is tempting to assume an island which is famous for little more than Homer and chewing gum must be a dull place but Chios hides a bright light under a modest bushel. Few tourists even know of the island's existence, although it is the fifth largest island in the Greek collection. Even some of my most enthusiastic Greek-island-hopping friends failed to locate it on their usually detailed mental maps.

You find it between Lesbos and Samos, so close to Turkey that the castle of Osmine can be clearly seen across the water on a sunny day. It is an affluent place, thanks to maritime money: 15 per cent of the world's commercial shipping is said to be owned by Chiot families and, until recently, they have felt little motivation to enter the tourist market. Besides, Chios has few really good beaches to attract the tourist crowds: a holiday here is more cerebral than that.

For me, the highlight of the island was a visit to the monastery of Nea Moni. Founded in 1045 and inspired

by a trio of monks who spotted a miraculous icon on the site, it is an atmospheric place, pungent with incense, and has the best views of the island. A bearded priest ushered me through an entrance way covered in ancient, smudged frescoes to another chamber, this time alive with an astonishing array of mosaics, celebrated for the vibrancy of their colours. Sombre-looking saints glared at me from the ceiling. "During the midnight masses," said the priest, "these faces shimmering in the candle light seem to come alive."

In the katholikon next door a clock struck eight — six hours adrift — stuck on ancient Byzantine time. The priest paused to show me a cupboard full of human skulls, a reminder of the infamous Turkish massacre of 1822.

The mastic-producing villages in the south of Chios, collectively known as the Masticora, were treated less harshly by the Turks at that time, thanks to their valuable crop. It seems the women in the sultan's harem were particularly fond of their chewing

gum, although mastic has 101 other uses.

For some reason, Chios is one of the very few places in the world where trees produce mastic. Some people say it is because of a combination of the island's volcanic terrain, soil and climate; villagers believe it is thanks to the tears of Saint Issidor, murdered in AD 250 by the Romans for embracing Christianity.

The most interesting of the Masticora is the village of Mesta, a classic example of fortified architecture with all the houses facing inwards, inter-connected by arches from roof to roof, assisting the villagers to flee attacking pirates — and these days, I was told, useful for young lovers hiding from parents.

Behind one perfectly ordinary-looking white-washed facade I found the little vaulted church of Taxiarchis and, at the far end, a massive reredos carved in the 12th century from a single chestnut tree, featuring delicately traced scenes from the old and new testaments, an intricate braile Bible, each little section worth a thousand words.

The man who carved that drank a bottle of ouzo every day to keep him in good humour," the old caretaker told me.

Chios has had more than its fair share of invaders over the centuries including the Genoese, who ruled the island for 500 or so years from the 14th century, and who, more than anyone, exploited the mastic

business. Columbus complained of high prices when he arrived in 1491 to pick up crew, maps and mastic trees to plan should he reach India. The explorer stayed in the Villa Homeric in the Campos area, a fertile valley close to Chora, the capital, which became home to the ruling Genoese elite and wealthy Chios.

Many of the old villas still stand behind high, honey-coloured stone walls, including the Villa Argentiokion. It is run as a sort of house party by the current marchese, a soft-spoken aristocrat from one of the old ruling Genoese families.

There are four villas within the two and a half acres of flower beds, orchards, herb gardens and secluded corners. At dinner you are served a Homeric feast by smart white-gloved waiters at a candlelit table covered in rose and set with the family silver under a spreading plane tree.

It seems very far away from most people's idea of a Greek island holiday; but then few people even know Chios is a Greek island.

Chios fact file

The author was a guest of the Greek Islands Club, 66 High Street, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 1BU (01932 220477) and stayed at the Villa Argentiokion, featured by the club. Prices range from £893 for a week in May to £1,180 a week in August. The prices are per person for four people sharing a villa, and include return flights from Heathrow to Athens, domestic flights to Chios and breakfast.

A taste of unknown Athens

You'll hate Athens. Lots of people say so, and they all give the same reasons: smog, traffic, crowds and few attractions beyond the obvious ones. Worst of all, it is said, you can't get a decent meal there, particularly in the tourist rip-off area known as the Plaka. Here, among the many restaurants, there is only one safe place to eat, they assure you. The trouble is, they all recommend somewhere different.

First, food. In the past couple of years I've spent several weeks in Athens, and eaten well for little more than the price of a visit to a burger bar in Britain. Take Socrates' Prison, for example, where I would gladly be imprisoned for a week in order to eat my way through the menu and sip the draught Guinness. Only a marble's throw from the Acropolis, the inside has a cosy, bar-like atmosphere, with pre-Raphaelite prints on the walls. Outside, there is an attractive walled garden. For £4 I had a delicious beef roll stuffed with parsley, green pepper and aubergine, and afterwards (for £1.50) a oven-baked apple bursting with raisins, sultanas and walnuts, and drowning in cream.

The Salamandra has only Greek menus, so take your phrase book or take a chance



Icon shop in Monastiraki, near the Plaka and flea market

on specials, which include *saganaka* (fried cheese) and *spetsafai* (a spicy sausage and pepper stew from the Pelion peninsula). And, if you think Greek salad means only one thing, how about one of its cranny Roquefort salads?

In the Plaka, there are any number of good eating places, as well as a few of the fast-turnover, poor-quality kind. Follow a few simple rules when eating in Greece, and you will not go far wrong. Never eat anywhere which employs someone to coax you inside. Ask to see the kitchen — not to

look at the food but to check out the chef. If he looks as if he has just escaped from prison, with the blood of his crimes still on his apron, and he has a cigarette dangling from his lips, you're safe. The food will probably be excellent.

For Plaka atmosphere, eat in one of the three basement tavernas along Kildhathineon. To eat outdoors, go to Xynos or O Platanos. Vegetarians should head for the Eden and its spinach or mushroom pies, meat-free moussaka and the best brown bread this side of the Bosphorus.

So what do you do for the rest of the day, to pass the time between meals? See the Acropolis, of course, and the National Archaeological Museum, and try not to miss the old classical site of Agora.

The Acropolis Study Centre has a fascinating display on how the Parthenon was built, including computer graphics showing how the stone was hauled from nearby quarries.

Among the many smaller museums of Athens, my favourite is the Museum of Greek Musical Instruments, in a 19th-century Plaka mansion. Here you can listen to the exhibits. These range from the urban blues of rembetika to shepherd's pipes and even a display on how to make music from a combination of worry beads and a wine glass. If you thought Greek music was a load of bouzouki, think again.

The Goulandris Museum of Cycladic Art is another treat, the central items being the artefacts of the Cycladic civilisation of 3000-2000 BC.

Finally, go beyond the Plaka's souvenir shops into the flea market west of Monastiraki Square, particularly on Sunday mornings, when the market extends for miles, and the noise is enough to wake the dead in the Kerameikos Cemetery alongside. Want to buy a religious icon, a stuffed stork, a car engine, second-hand camera, bootleg music tapes? Then come to Athens on a Sunday morning.

In fact, go to Athens at anytime. I love the place. So might you.

Mike Gerrard is the author of *Essential Athens* (published by the AA, £4.99).

Athens fact file

British Airways (0181-759 5511), Olympic Airways (0171-409 3400) and Virgin Atlantic Airways (01293 562349) fly daily to Athens, from around £300 return, but all are at present doing special offers ranging from about £119 to £140.

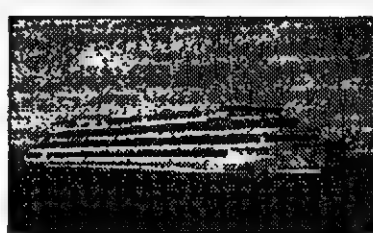
Among the many tour operators offering packages to Athens are: Abroad Holidays (0181-767 3030), Eurobreak Holidays (0181-780 7700), Citybreaks (0141-951 8411) and Simple Simon (0171-373 1933).

For further details, contact the Greek National Tourist Office, 4 Conduit Street, London W1 0DF (0171-734 5997).

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Our journey will include the holy cities of the Golden Ring, ancient Nizhni Novgorod, the once invincible Golden Horde (Tartar Empire) capital of Kazan, Volgograd (Stalingrad) scene of some of the fiercest World War II fighting and Astrakhan, a former capital of another



Tartar Empire which fell to Ivan the Terrible in 1556. In addition we will make

calls into little known cities, towns and villages which will offer an insight into life in this vast region of Russia.

The ideal time to travel is in the spring and autumn and our sailings offer the opportunity to travel in late April or October, locally known as the 'velvet season'. The April cruise is aboard the 100 passenger 'Yessenin', one of the finest river vessels in Russia. The October sailings are on the 250 passenger 4 star 'Krasin' or the 3 star 'Karamzin'.

CITIES OF THE TARTARS AND TSARS

A 21 DAY RIVER VOYAGE ALONG THE VOLGA FROM MOSCOW TO THE CASPIAN SEA FROM ONLY £1295

THE ITINERARY

DAY 1 London (Heathrow)-Moscow Embark vessel which will moor overnight.

DAY 2 Moscow Morning city excursion. Sail in the afternoon.

DAY 3 Uglich Founded in 1148 this Golden Ring city offers a treasure trove of historic sites. Visit the Kremlin, the cathedral and church of St John and the cathedral of the Transfiguration.

DAY 4 Kostroma Home to the noble families Godunov and Romanov before the young Alexei Romanov was elected tsar. See wonderful 18th and 19th century architecture including the Ipatievsky Monastery.

DAY 5 Nizhni Novgorod Formerly known as Gorki, the city was closed to foreigners until 1990. Founded in 1221 it became famous as an important trading post attracting caravans from Siberia and the Orient. Visit the magnificent Kremlin.

DAY 6 Cruising the Volga

DAY 7 Samara We will spend the afternoon in this important river trading city. Stroll along the river promenade and late permitting visit Stalin's secret bunker, built in 1942 as a precaution in case he had to flee from Moscow.

DAY 8 Cruising the Volga

DAY 9 Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad) Explore this strategically placed city at the confluence of the Volga and Don rivers. Visit Mamai Hill, site of the most ferocious fighting during the Winter of 1942 which resulted in over 200,000 deaths. See the 107m statue of Mother Russia and the memorial — a most moving experience.

DAY 10 Cruising the Volga

DAY 11 Astrakhan Located 70 feet below sea level on a huge island in the Volga Delta. This is a fascinating city which is divided by the Kutum River and linked by more than 30 bridges. The city's old bridge with dozens of arches, is over two miles long. Ivan the Terrible conquered the city in 1556 and annexed it to Russia.

DAY 12 Cruising the Volga

DAY 13 Divnyshin Island A morning to walk and relax in peaceful setting.

DAY 14 Saratov One of the oldest cities in the Volga, Saratov is surrounded by mountains and is best known as the home of the writer and politician, Chayshesky and the world's first cosmonaut — Yuri Gagarin.

DAY 15 Cruising the Volga

DAY 16 Symbirsk Formerly known as Ulyanovsk, this was the birthplace and boyhood home of Lenin. A Soviet shrine for over 70 years, it is surprising to see how prominent a place Lenin still occupies in the national psyche.

DAY 17 Kazan Half Russian, half Tartar this thriving port is a unique blend of Christian and Muslim cultures. Conquered by the ever industrious Ivan the Terrible in 1552 this capital of the Tartar republic was founded in the 13th century by the Mongols. Tolstoy and Lenin studied here and the State Museum offers a marvellous insight into the history of the Tartars.

DAY 18 Kozmodemyansk-Yaroslavl Here in this lovely town founded by Ivan the Terrible

we hope to arrange an outdoor concert of Mari folk music. This is the capital of the Mari Autonomous Republic, the Mari are ethnically related to the Finns. In the afternoon we will call into the delightful village of Yurmo, a well preserved merchant village of the 19th century which is surrounded by forest.

DAY 19 Yaroslavl Founded in 1010 this is one of the foremost cities of the Golden Ring. In the 17th century it established itself as a great mercantile centre and was home to some of the richest families, resulting in some truly splendid architecture.

DAY 20 Cruising the Volga

DAY 21 Moscow Visit the Kremlin and the Armoury. Afternoon free. Evening visit to the Circus.

DAY 22 Moscow-London Afternoon flight to London (Heathrow).

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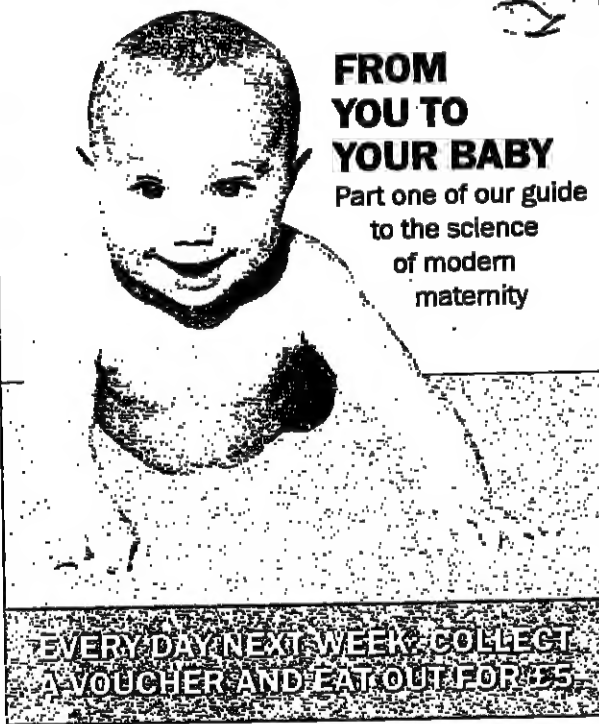
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Rob Hughes
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City v Leeds United
Andrew Longmore
on QPR v Liverpool



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of modern
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Howard set
to reject
Hindley
transfer

By RICHARD FORD AND KATE ALDERSON

MICHAEL HOWARD is expected to reject a Parole Board recommendation that Myra Hindley be moved to an open prison and given the hope of eventual freedom. The Home Secretary will give his verdict on the proposal that Hindley be transferred to easier jail conditions within the next few weeks.

Hindley, 54, yesterday refused to comment on the proposed move, disclosed in *The Times*, during a telephone conversation from Durham Prison with a member of her legal team. She is understood to want a move to the more relaxed regime offered by the three open jails for women in England and Wales and hopes for her freedom.

But she accepts the practical and political difficulties involved in a move to a prison without perimeter fences.

Mr Howard, visiting Birmingham, said no decision had yet been made on the recommendation, which was made after a review of her case last month.

The Home Secretary is unlikely to risk the public outcry that moving Hindley to an open jail would cause. He is also likely to take into account the fears for her safety if she were sent to a prison where it would be easy for members of the public to gain access. One

prison source said: "Ironically, Hindley probably needs protection from the public rather than the other way round."

Mr Howard is under no obligation to accept the Parole Board recommendation and can take into account wider considerations than whether Hindley represents a risk to the public. One is "maintaining public confidence in the criminal justice system".

The Parole Board suggestion provoked fury from the parents of children who were killed by Hindley and her lover, Ian Brady. They were jailed for life in 1966 for the murders of Lesley Ann Downey and Edward Evans. In 1987 Hindley confessed to her role in the killings of Pauline Reade and Keith Bennett.

It was this confession which caused Lord Waddington, when Home Secretary in 1990, to order her to remain in prison for the rest of her life.

Yesterday Ann West, the mother of Lesley Anne, said she was disgusted by the recommendation. "I was satisfied with her imprisonment in Durham but this new recommendation is devastating," she said.

"Hindley has tortured me for the last 31 years and she should stay behind bars under lock and key. She is an evil and calculating woman and I'm sure she will try and escape from an open prison."

Winnie Johnson, the mother of Keith Bennett, who went missing aged 12 in June 1964 and whose body was never found, said she believed Hindley would attempt to escape from an open prison. "She will do her best to escape and when she does I will follow her and torture her like she tortured the children she killed."

"Anyone who can believe she would not kill again if she got the chance must be an idiot."



Howard: taking wider factors into account



David Lane, clutching his father's helmet, with his mother at Blauna cemetery

Village pays tribute to firemen

By A STAFF REPORTER

FIREFIGHTERS and villagers lined the streets of Blauna, Gwent, yesterday to pay tribute to two firemen who died in a blazing house last week.

The coffins of Kevin Lane, 32, and Stephen Griffin, 42, were carried on two fire tenders decked with wreaths. Mr Lane's son David, 8, travelled in the front seat.

At the service Mr Griffin's daughter Tina, 17, sang the pop song *Eternal Flame*.

Later Andrew Griffin, 20, and David Lane were given their fathers' yellow helmets.

At Blauna cemetery the Welsh dragon flags that had covered the men's coffins were given to their widows, Margaret Griffin and Sian Lane. The two firemen were then laid to rest side by side.

The funeral procession passed within 200 yards of the charred council house where the part-time firemen died last week. They had rescued Daniel Harford, 5, and went back into a house after wrongly

being told another child was trapped. Daniel died later. The men are to be nominated for bravery awards.

The supermarket blaze in which the firefighter Fleur Lombard died on Sunday was started deliberately, police said yesterday. Detectives were questioning a 20-year-old security guard at the Leo's store at Staple Hill, Bristol.

About 500 members of Avon Fire Brigade are expected at the funeral of Miss Lombard, 21, in Derby Cathedral on Tuesday.

Manchester misses its rain

By NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT
CORRESPONDENT

THE crisis facing the nation's water supplies was underscored yesterday with news that Manchester, known as one of the rainiest cities in England, is now one of Europe's driest, ahead of Madrid and Athens.

Weathermen said the past ten months in the area had been the driest for 70 years. "In absolute terms, Majorca has been the driest," the Manchester weather centre said. "But as a proportion, Manchester has been the driest in Western Europe, with 30

per cent of its normal rainfall. Most parts of Europe have had 80 to 90 per cent of their normal rainfall."

The centre added that the winter had been unseasonably dry because cold easterlies had pushed the usual rain-bearing Atlantic weather fronts north and south of the British Isles. This was one of the reasons why Spain had had such bad weather.

The findings, which underline how the past year has seen Britain's weather patterns turn upside-down, making the North drier than the South, came as North West Water announced a £75 million programme to preserve supplies.

The anti-drought schemes include 34 projects to guarantee supplies to towns in east Lancashire and east and south of Manchester, where local reservoirs have emptied, and 26 projects to provide an extra 105 million litres of water a day by increased abstraction from boreholes and upgrading treatment works.

Paris of Scotland, Wales and the North of England face the threat of flooding this weekend as rising temperatures begin a rapid thaw of ice and snow. The far north of Scotland will be battered by gales and driving sleet.

Forecast, page 24

Major says status of
EMU test is unclear

By NICHOLAS WOOD
AND JILL SHERMAN

JOHN MAJOR has admitted that the status of one of the key tests for a 1998 go-ahead for a single currency is unclear.

The Prime Minister's comment came in a letter to Peter Shore, the former Labour Cabinet minister, who has been pressing the Government to concede that the effective collapse of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism has wrecked the legal basis for economic and monetary union.

Last night Mr Shore said

the British and other European governments were in a "mess and a muddle" over a single currency. His exchanges with Mr Major and Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, showed that Britain can veto a move to a single currency. Any future government should not hesitate to use that weapon and halt the "damaging and misconceived" plan for EMU, he said.

Mr Major said in his letter this week that the "exact status" of the ERM test was unclear, given the upheavals since the Maastricht signing.

Minister
backed on
probation
training

The High Court has backed the Home Secretary's move to scrap the need for trainee probation officers to have a social work qualification. The probation officers' trade union had claimed that Michael Howard had abused his powers by ending the requirement. But two judges ruled that he had acted within his discretion when he decided that a social work diploma or similar qualification was no longer appropriate and instead recruits should train "on the job". Mr Howard will now push ahead with attempts to recruit more mature entrants, including retired members of the Forces, into the Probation Service.

Leave to appeal was refused, and the union was ordered to pay Mr Howard's costs.

Spending limit

A plan to cap public spending and eliminate the threat of emergency tax increases was put forward last night by a former Cabinet minister. John Patten, Education Secretary from 1992-94, said that by law the State should not be able to spend more than 40 per cent of national income. John Major has said he would like to get spending down to 35 per cent of gross domestic product.

Witness appeal

Police are appealing for witnesses after a 16-year-old boy was stabbed to death in a McDonald's restaurant. Daniel Westmacott, of Edmonton, north London, was attacked by a group of youths on Thursday after an altercation at the restaurant in Edmonton between him and three teenagers. Daniel was stabbed in the back with a seven-inch carving knife.

Fatal blunder

Rupert Joslin, 36, is considering legal action against Wycombe General Hospital, Buckinghamshire, after it admitted responsibility for the death of his wife, Violet, 85. Mr Joslin of Marlow, gave his wife twice the recommended dose of the drug warfarin on a hospital technician's instruction. A verdict of accidental death was recorded at an inquest yesterday.

Scott hits back

Sir Richard Scott today defends his arms-to-Iraq inquiry, denying that it was either unfair or aggressive. "I don't think there is any argument to support the unfairness charge," he says in an interview with *The Times*. He acknowledges that ministers were put under pressure in giving evidence in public but says that it was justified.

Valerie Grove, page 6

CORRECTION

A photograph yesterday of Mrs Ann Fidler was incorrectly captioned in some editions. We apologise for the error.

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